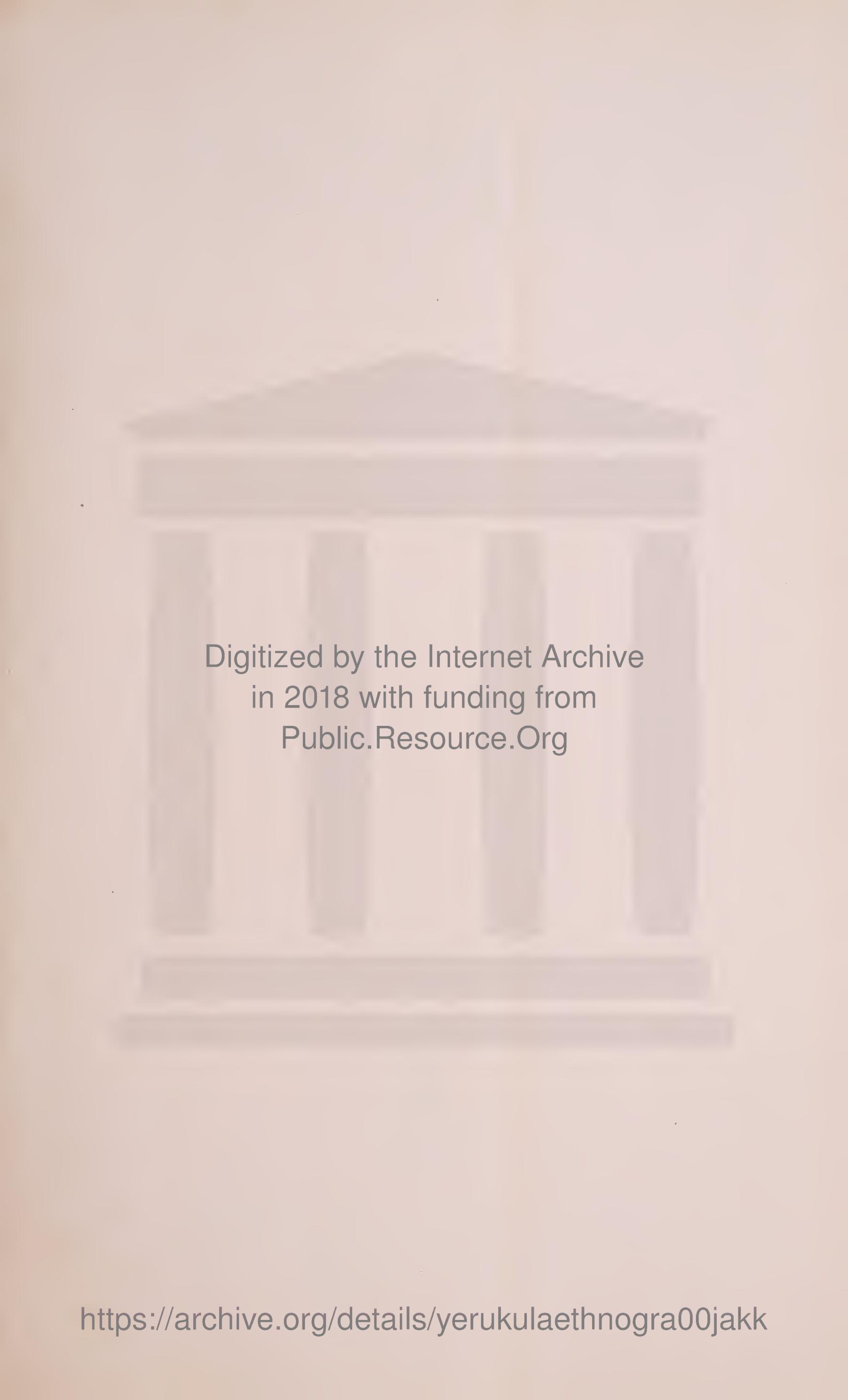


THE YERUKULA
AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

JAKKA PARTHASARATHY



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AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY**

JAKKA PARTHASARATHY



**ANTHROPOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE
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INTRODUCTION

This ethnographic study of the Yerukula aims at delineating their adaptive strategy for subsistence. The Yerukula, one of the major scheduled tribes of Andhra Pradesh inhabits more or less a compact area in the plains spread over the districts of Guntur, Anantapur, Krishna, Kurnool, Nellore and some parts of Cuddapah and Chittoor districts.

The tribal population of Andhra Pradesh according to 1971 census is 1,657,657 which works out to 3.81 per cent of the total population of Andhra Pradesh. The total population of the Yerukula community as per the 1971 census figures is 1,62,560 and it forms 0.31 per cent of the total population of Andhra Pradesh and 9.8 per cent of the total scheduled tribal population of the state.

The Yerukula are known by several names like Korcha, Korava, Kaikadi etc. They were once a nomadic population and like many other nomadic groups they are also gradually settling down. The Yerukula are experts in making baskets and ropes, but they engage themselves in several other occupations like fortune-telling, trade etc., The common impression is that the Yerukula are congenial thieves and are kept under the strict vigilance of the police. They speak a dialect called 'Yerkali basha', which appears to be a mixture of several languages. They are divided into three endogamous groups namely, Bidari Yerukula, Dabba Yerukula and Kunchi Yerukula on the basis of their traditional occupations.

Overview of literature on the Yerukula

In his book 'Castes and tribes of Southern India', Thurston (1909) vividly described about the Yerukula's origin, legends, customs etc., under the name of 'Korava'. Ramachandra Sastri in his Telugu book 'Neramulu Cheyu Jatula Charitramulu' (1916) described the criminal behaviour of different types of Yerukulas living in and around Madras presidency region. Ramesan (1960) in his article 'A tribe in Andhra', explained the nature of the nomadic movement of the Yerukula and the pattern of their settlement. Their mode of no-

madism with reference to other nomadic population is described by Misra (1969). Simhadri (1974) in his book 'Excriminal tribes of India', described the institutional factors and criminality among the Yerukula. A detailed account of their customary laws and their political organization has been discussed by Parthasarathy (1978).

The problem

The above studies, however, were confined to certain aspects of social organization of the tribe in the context of ethnography. But the present ethnographic study, which is holistic, also aims at studying the Yerukula community with special reference to their adaptive strategy for subsistence.

Theorists who advocated an ecological point of view usually observe environmental circumstances in combination with a community's technology and even determining forms of social organisation. As Kroeber (1969 : 350) rightly opines "that on the one hand culture can be understood primarily only in terms of cultural factors, but that on the other hand no culture is wholly intelligible without reference to the non-cultural or so called environmental factors with which it is in relation and which condition it". In Levine's (1975 : 213) words, "Culture is composed of the energy systems of a population and its methods of exploiting them, of the organization of social, political and economic relations of language, customs, beliefs, rules and arts—of every thing that is learned from other people or their works". This view emphasizes the functional importance of culture as an adaptive mechanism, as a generic term for the sum total of the ways by which a society organizes its relations to its environment and the way it is internally organized. Thus culture can be conceptualized as a strategy of adaptation.

Cohen (1968 : 3) defines a population's adaptation as its relationship to its habitat and states that "the adaptation of man is accomplished by cultural means, through the harnessing of new sources of energy for productive ends and through the organization of social relation that make it possible to use these energy systems effectively" (P. 4). And elsewhere (1968 : 4) he says that "adaptation in man is the process by which he makes effective use for productive ends of the energy potential in his habitat". Thus adaptation refers to a particular aspect of ecological relationships. That is, how people in a particular environment characteristically extract and use the resources of that environment for their subsistence. Thus the present study also seeks to explain and to understand the life of the Yerukula in two different locations in terms of environment and adaptation.

Selection of the study area

The first methodological problem concerns the choice of the field. For the purpose of this study I have selected the State of Andhra Pradesh as the majority of the Yerukulas inhabit the state. According to the information given by the Census of India 1971, Andhra Pradesh, the concentration of the Yerukula is maximum in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh and they are also found in good numbers in Krishna and Anantapur districts. As the Yerukula population is large in Guntur district, in the beginning I wanted to select Guntur district, but through different sources I come to know that the Yerukula of Guntur and Krishna districts were settled by the Salvation Army Officials before Independence for supervision and rehabilitation. The Salvation Army is a religious body organized throughout the world. It was founded by William Booth in London, England, in the year 1861. Booth believed in Jesus Christ and God ; yet believed that praying to God without proper food, shelter and clothing were meaningless. He thought we should change first the physical conditions and then aspire for salvation. His views were in accordance with the Indian saying that ‘Manava seve Madhava seva’ (Service to people is service to God). With the principles of soup, soap and salvation, William Booth started the Salvation Army to work among the underprivileged. The symbol of the Salvation Army is “Blood and Fires” which meant blood of Jesus Christ and fire of the holy spirit. The main objective of the Salvation Army is described by Robert Sandal : “It is to relieve those miseries from which men suffer so much in this life, which seriously hinder their chance of Heaven hereafter, and reforms that conduct from which the bulk of this misery proceeds.”¹ Frederick Booth-Tucker, son-in-law of William Booth, born in India to British parents on March 21, 1853, started the Salvation Army in India ². Under the Act of 1911, the Government of India thought to put the wandering criminal groups in settlements and to rehabilitate them. The Salvation Army was found to be a good agency to be put in charge of the settlements. Some experiments were conducted on Doms, a tribe in North India. In the year 1911 the Salvation Army Officials who were operating in northern parts of India accepted the request of Madras Government to rehabilitate the criminals of Andhra areas. The Yerukula of Guntur and Krishna districts were handed over to them for supervision and rehabilitation. The Salvation Army was vested with full powers—like administration, political etc., and were

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1. Robert Sandal, ‘The History of the Salvation Army’, Third Volume, Volume on Social reform and Welfare work, New York : Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1955, Introduction.
 2. Y. C. Simhadri, ‘The Ex-Criminal tribes of India, National, 1979.

allowed to preach Christianity and mend the criminal habits of these tribals. Apart from other activities the Salvation Army started educational institutions for them and also started giving them intensive religious preachings.

Keeping the above process of historical activity, finally I thought it better to avoid the Yerukula of Guntur and Krishna districts, who were influenced by the Salvation Army, and hence I decided to study the Yerukula in Anantapur district, which is considered as the home of the Yerukula. Anantapur district is the western most of the Ceded districts³. In the year 1977 when I was involved in a National Project “Tribal Customary Law”, I studied the tribe Yerukula in the district of Anantapur and at that time I had covered Gooty and Anantapur taluks. But now in the year 1979 after consulting with the then District Collector Shri T. K. Diwan, I selected the taluks of Kadiri and Dharmavaram in Anantapur district for studying two Yerukula villages.

Selection of the villages

When I was in Anantapur town, district headquarters, I contacted the Office of the District Tribal Welfare and enquired as to the existing position of the Tribal settlements in general and the Yerukulas in particular in Kadiri and Dharmavaram taluks. Then I proceeded to Kadiri town, Taluk headquarters and contacted Kadiri East Block Development Officer, Sri G. Sheshagiri Rao. Through his help, I made a quick reconnoitre tour of many Yerukula settlements and finally, Epilapalli, an interior village located amidst huge hills was selected as an interior village for this study. In Epilapalli village only the Bidari Yerukula inhabit. For studying the Yerukula in a plain and an exposed village, I selected ‘Ananthasagaram’ village in Dharmavaram taluk.

3. The State of Andhra Pradesh has been divided into three regions namely, Ceded district or Rayalaseema, coastal Andhra or Andhra region and Telangana or Nizam's territory for Political considerations. The development of these regions are entrusted to three separate Regional Development Boards.

Ceded districts or Rayalaseema region comprises the districts of Anantapur, Cuddapah, Kurnool and Chittoor *Andhra region or Coastal Andhra* region comprises the districts of Nellore, Prakasam, Guntur, Krishna, West Godavari, East Godavari, Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam.

Telangana region comprises the districts of Mahaboobnagar, Hyderabad, Ranga Reddy, Khammam, Nalgonda, Medak, Warangal, Nizamabad, Karimnagar and Adilabad.

In Ananthasagaram village, the Yerukula traditional settlement is situated along with the other inhabitants of different castes. This village is encircled by isolated peaks and rocky clusters which is characteristic of the Deccan plateau. Since our interest was to understand how people in a particular environment characteristically extract and use the resources of that environment, Epilapalli and Ananthasagaram villages with sizeable Yerukula population at one spot and amidst the village multi-caste respectively provided a reasonable settings for the investigation.

Field methodology

According to Andre Beteille “If we wish to investigate the social life of a particular set of people we may adopt either the method of social surveys or the method of intensive fieldwork. Each method has certain advantages. In the first case we can collect material in a standardized form, and eliminate or at least largely reduce the investigator’s bias. In the second case we are able to get a picture of the community in the round, so to say, and to probe into those aspects of its life whose relevance could not be anticipated in advance. Which method one chooses to emphasize will depend on the nature of the enquiry, and the two methods can of course be used in combination” (1975 : 99). The tradition of field work has strongly influenced the content and course of Social Anthropology.

My emphasis has been mostly on qualitative data in the two villages which are selected for intensive study. I depended mainly on observation, particularly participant observation, various types of interviews and collection of case histories, genealogies and also historical information.

I carried out altogether six month’s fieldwork in two phases of tours. The first phase of fieldwork was for three months during November—January of 1979-1980. The second phase of field work lasted for another three months i.e., from 25th July 1981 to 21st October 1981.

I was first introduced to the Yerukula of Epilapalli village by the village Development Officer of Block Development Office, Kadiri East. In the first phase of field work I was convinced that the way in which I was introduced to the people of Epilapalli, an interior Yerukula village was wrong. I was introduced as one that had come to study the village people while the Yerukula thought that there was nothing to be studied about them and this made the Yerukula of Epilapalli to misunderstand my intentions. They took me to be a

C.I.D or a man in disguise from the Police department. So whenever I approached them they maintained a distance. They were not willing to tell anything to me. I was completely left alone. Then immediately I rushed to the elderly and most respected person of the Bidari Yerukula who is living at Kondakamarla, 34 kms. to Kadiri town and he introduced me to the Yerukula headmen of Epilapalli village. Slowly I tried my best to come closer to all Yerukulas. I met some school going Yerukula students also and it created a further rapport with the Yerukula as the Yerukula, specially the aged people, have a favourable image about their school going children. Then only I started to take the census of the village during which I was acquainted with their dress, food and the ways of hospitality. Thus a good impression was created in the minds of the local Yerukulas about me. While I visited Epilapalli again during the IIInd phase of fieldwork I felt that I came to enjoy the cultural life in Epilapalli. Thus I completed my fieldwork by following basically Participant observation for collecting the relevant data in both the Yerukula villages. At the same time regarding the information on food consumption, income and expenditure, through participant observation I focused my interest on a set of selected families in a village and observed continuously for seven days, rather than on an analysis of the total configuration of the village community.

Language and dialect

Proper communication is also an essential factor and here lies the importance of knowing the language of the field area. Yerukulas have a separate dialect. They do not have any written script. Formal education is however in Telugu. Their dialect, known as *Yerukula basha*, is mostly derived from Tamil and Kannada. But the Yerukula very often speak the regional language i.e., Telugu as much as they use *Yerukula basha*. Though Telugu is my mother tongue I slowly picked up the dialect of the Yerukulas. Thus communication with the people of Epilapalli was easy and natural, and helped me to be accepted by the Yerukula.

Census data

Census details in two selected villages were collected on name, age, relation with head of the family, sex, marital status, education, occupation etc., Land particulars were collected through village Karanam (Accountant). They were, however, cross checked with the land holders. The other field technique used is collection of genealogies, to get information on kinship and marriage networks.

THE YERUKULA

Tribes in India form about seven per cent of our total population. In this chapter I wish to describe the Yerukula community in tribal context. The Yerukula are the plains living tribe, predominantly living in Andhra Pradesh but are also found separately in Karnataka and in Tamilnadu states. According to 1971 Census, the Yerukula population in Andhra Pradesh is 1,62,560. Yerukulas in Andhra Pradesh are classified as a scheduled tribe.

What is a tribe

In the Indian context the term tribe has never been defined precisely and satisfactorily. The problem of defining a tribe has been with the anthropologists and administrators for quite sometime (Ghurye, 1963 : 1-22). According to S. C. Dube, "In our thinking so far the term 'tribe' has been used rather loosely, and even anthropologists who have made the study of such communities an important part of their professional activities have not been able to develop a set of precise indices to classify groups as 'tribal' or 'non tribal'" (1968 : 107). The term tribe or tribal may have different meanings even for anthropologists. In the past, leaving aside the historical reasons why and how a section of India's population was classified under the category tribe. After independence, they were redesignated as scheduled tribes or commonly called adivasi. However, the concept of scheduled tribe or *adivasi*, as conceived by the Indian administrators, continued to differ from that of anthropologists (T. B. Naik 1968 : 84-97). Today anthropologists and administrators use the same definition and refer to the list of scheduled tribes for the purpose of recognizing a tribe. Though the debate has been largely unproductive, it should be noted that while scholars were looking for an apt definition they were keen to distinguish clearly a tribe from a caste (P. K. Misra 1977 : 85).

T. B. Naik's attempt in understanding what is a tribe; conflicting definitions; deserve special mention. Even though he concluded that yet we do not know 'what a tribe is' he suggested the following criteria for a tribe :

- 1 A tribe to be a 'tribe' should have the least functional interdependence within the community.
- 2 It should be economically backward, which means :
 - i the full import of monetary economies should not be understood by its members ;
 - ii primitive means of exploiting natural resources should be used ;
 - iii the tribe's economy should be in an underdeveloped stage ; and
 - iv it should have multifarious economic pursuits.
- 3 there should be a comparative geographic isolation of its people from others.
- 4 Culturally, members of a tribe should have a common dialect which may be subject to regional variations.
- 5 A tribe should be politically organized and its community panchayet should be an influential institution.
- 6 The tribe's members should have the least desire to change. They should have a sort of psychological conservatism making them stick to their old customs.
- 7 A tribe should have customary laws and its members might have to suffer in a law court because of these laws. (T. B. Naik 1968 : 85-86).

In partial corroboration of the above, the late professor Majumdar defined tribe as "A tribe is a social group with territorial affiliation, endogamous, with no specialization of functions, ruled by Tribal Officers, hereditary or otherwise, united in language or dialect, recognizing social distance from tribes or castes but without any stigma attached in the case of caste structure, following tribal traditions, beliefs and customs, illiberal of naturalization of ideas from alien sources, above all conscious of a homogeneity of ethnic and territorial integration." As the various definitions on tribe are not apt the definite nature of the tribe, S. C. Dube concluded in his introduction to 'Tribal heritage of India', that, "the long debate over the definition of a tribe having proved sterile, it may be best now to view it as an ethnic category defined by real or putative descent and characterized by a corporate self-identity and a wide range of commonly shared traits of culture... Tribal ethnicity should be studied both in its expressive and instrumental dimensions" (1977 : 4-5).

The Yerukula : a tribe

Let us see how far Yerukulas exhibit the tribal characteristics. The Yerukula believe that they were the original inhabitants of the country. This support the opinion given by Elwin Verrier that the Criminal tribes were the natives of the country. The Yerukula as criminals will be discussed later. The Yerukula reported that they belonged to one of the Dravidian family of Languages, i.e., Tamil. The Yerukulas were called to be nomadic people and living in hill areas. They were nomadic in character. They used to travel from one place to another.

The Yerukula have their distinct common dialect called 'Yerukula basha' and they are identified with the dialect. They could easily identify whether or not a stranger was a Yerukula, through their dialect. Among them it is also observed that they have been subjected to regional variations. For instance, a Yerukula in Tamilnadu would use more Tamil words and in Karnataka, the Yerukula use more Kannada words while talking in Yerukula dialect.

The Yerukula's economy was too backward. They were isolated geographically and had little contact with outsiders. They hardly use money as a means of exchange. The Yerukula are divided into three large endogamous groups on the basis of their traditional occupations. They are Bidari Yerukula (collectors of forest produce), Dabba Yerukula (basket making) and Kunche Yerukula (fortune-telling). They have multifarious economic pursuits. The Biddari Yerukula's primary occupation is collecting the curry leaf (*Murraya Koenigii*), tamarind, pulses, rock salt and other minor forest produce from their immediate ecological setting and selling it in the nearby villages on barter basis, which still continues. Besides the above activity, they also make mats, ropes, twines, slings etc.,

The members of Yerukula community appears to be having the least desire to change. They are having a sort of psychological conservatism which makes them stick to their old customs. But here it is worth mentioning that tribal characteristics are not rigid in the Indian social structural context. Ghurye (1949) and Naik (1968) did not totally agree with the view that the tribal characteristics are strictly tribal in nature. They feel that when the tribes lived in the village organisation, they became part and parcel of that village structure which I also found to be the same aspect in Ananthasagaram village under study.

Schapera defines political organization as "that aspect of the total

Organization which is concerned with the establishment and maintenance of internal co-operation and external independence" (1956 : 218). Heuristically this definition could be useful in understanding the political system of a primitive society. The society of the tribal people is generally compact. The cohesion and solidarity among its people are chiefly maintained by the unwritten law which is systematic and integrated. The dominant feature of the Yerukula political organization is its *Kula panchayat*, which adjudicates all disputes arising in it. The members of the Kula panchayat are the elders of the Yerukula settlement. Each kula panchayat has a headman called *Berumonusha*. The kula panchayat processes all disputes between the members of the Yerukula settlement. When the kula panchayat is not able to get the truth through negotiation and oral examination, it resorts to various sorts of ordeals to get at the truth which may include such activities as dipping fingers in boiling oil, lifting a red hot crowbar etc. They believe that an innocent person will not be harmed whereas the guilty would get hurt and thus exposed. The Kula panchayat has the authority to impose fine, punishment and excommunicate the guilty. I have discussed this issue elsewhere (Parthasarathy : 1979).

The above illustration showed that the Yerukula are a tribe, who exhibit the tribal characteristics as enlisted by T. B. Naik. Now let me analyse briefly why the Yerukula are referred as ex-criminal tribe.

The Yerukula : an ex-criminal tribe

The Government of India, under British Rule, passed an enactment in 1871 under which the tribes committing criminal activites were categorized as criminal tribes and organized tribal criminality as a fact was recognized. Whoever belonged to such tribes were recognized as criminals. Haikerwal mentioned in his book, 'Economic and Social Aspects of crime in India', that 'The criminal tribes were wandering tribes who from times immemorial have earned their livelihood by practising nefarious acts of the same kind which the gypsies in Europe adopted until a generation or two ago. These tribes were known as criminal tribes because the men and women born within it take to crime just as duck takes to water because it is a duck" (1934 : 144). Members of those groups were treated both by the Government and the people as born criminals. The government always kept vigilant watch over their movements. For the first time in the 1911 census, the tribes with criminal occupations were categorized as criminal tribes.

When the control of the traditional criminal behaviour on the part of the certain tribals became a problem for the British Government, they felt a necessity for preventive and deterrent purposes to treat the entire tribal group legally as a criminal tribe. In this way all the members could be kept under continuous watch and vigilance. The criminal tribes Act of 1871 thus was enacted with the assumption that unless the entire tribe was put under certain restrictions it would be difficult to detect the professional criminals in it. In 1908 the first Criminal Tribes Settlement Act was passed. But the desired result was not achieved by the Act of 1908. Consequently it was again amended in 1911. According to the Act of 1911, the criminal tribes were classified into three categories, *viz.*,

- (a) Tribes who were originally criminal, but had settled down to honest occupations.
- (b) Tribes who had settled abodes and generally some ostensible occupation but who periodically committed decoities and robberies at distant places from their homes and lived by such gains, and
- (c) Nomadic tribes who wandered continuously and committed robberies whenever opportunities offered.

According to this Act, the Yerukula of Madras province were included in 'C' category as a criminal tribe.

During the years 1947-48, after India achieved its independence a few social reformers realized that the Criminal Tribes Act was a blot in the Indian statutes. Various states in India took steps to repeal the Criminal Tribes Act. The Madras government (Andhra Pradesh then in Madras State) was the first to take steps to repeal the Act in 1949. As a result, the sway of 80 years of the Criminal Tribes Act was repealed in 1952 (Simhadri, 1979 : 35). Before they became plainmen, the Yerukula were said to be earning their livelihood by stealing, robbery and looting the villages. Although in the year 1952, the Indian Government repealed the Act and legal stigma was removed, still now, the Yerukula are referred as ex-criminal tribes and, in fact, social stigma has continued. In due course of time, the term 'Criminal tribes' was legally changed to 'Notified tribes' and then to as 'Denotified tribes', or 'Vimukta jatulu'. Then recently the government of Andhra Pradesh included all the denotified tribes under scheduled tribes. Now the Yerukula are considered as scheduled tribe throughout the Andhra Pradesh State.

Aiyappan, writing about beggary in India, described the Yerukula of Andhra Pradesh as hereditary begging caste. While discussing hereditary begging castes, most of whom, have taken up various subsidiary occupations to go with begging, Aiyappan makes a significant point that these Yerukulas who lacked the skill and stamina to undertake thieving have begging and basket-making as a full time occupation (1981 : 28-29).

The Yerukula : Synonyms

Members of this tribe who settled in different states, where many languages and dialects are spoken, are generally known by different names in different localities. Thurston writes about the Korava that “they are known as Korava from the extreme south to the north of the North Arcot district, where they are called Koracha or Korchha, and in the Ceded districts they become Yerukula or Yerakala” (1909 : 439). The common features of these groups (*i.e.*, the Yerukula, Koracha, Korava) like nomadic way of life, commensality and intermarriages support the general impression that they are the same people but called by different names in the different regions.

Etymologically the word ‘Yerukula’, is derived from the Telugu word ‘Yeruka’ which means foresight or disclosing the facts about the future present and past of one’s life. The word ‘Yeruka chepputa’ means fortune telling. This is done by the Yerukula women. Dr. Oppert’s opinion also supports this. He says that “it is highly probable that the name and the occupation of the fortune telling Kuruvandlu or Kuluvandlu induced the Telugu people to call this tribe Yerukulavandlu” (see Thurston, 1909 : 441). But a few authors like Balfour assigned that they got their name through their spoken language. According to Balfour (cyclopaedia of India)” The Koravas, or a certain section of them *i.e.*, the Kunchi Koravas, were known as Yerkal Koravar, and they called the language they spoke Yerkal.....the word Yerkal undoubtedly stands for Yerukula and Kurshi for Korchha” (Trurston 1909 : 443).

In the ethnographic survey of Hyderabad city conducted at Picket, Secunderabad area, it is stated that Kaikadi is a Maratha term for Yerukulas and that Yerukulas in certain parts of Telangana region are popularly known as Kaikadi (Census of India, A. P. 1961 : 12).

It may be summarised, therefore that the Yerukula, the Koracha or Korchha, the Korava and Kaikadi refer to the same group of people.

Historical account

Yerukulas are said to have existed since the time of Mahabharatha when they were good bowmen and experts in archery¹. A Yerukula head in Erragudi village narrated the following account of their origin : "We are the offspring of Dharmaraja, the eldest of the Pandavas. He further said, that, Dharmaraja went into exile to avoid quarrels with his cousin Dur-yodhana. While in exile he met a woman who was in the disguise of a fortune teller, who fell in love with him. This led to the birth of the Yerukula, who continue to have the profession of fortune-telling (Parthasarathy, 1979 : 18).

According to H. V. Nanjundayya and L. K. Anantha Krishna Iyyer, "the origin and tradition of the tribe are buried in obscurity. It is very probable that they are an aboriginal tribe in the process of Hinduisiation. Nevertheless mythological or fanciful legends are not wanting to explain their origin" (1930 : 585). They further concluded that "there is a story current that Parvathi, the consort of Siva, once disguised herself as a sooth sayer, and that Koramas were her descendants" (*Opcit* : 585). Regarding the Yerukula profession, the author writes "a Medar was asked to prepare a cradle for Parvathi's child out of a serpent, with its stomach filled with precious stones, but he was afraid of touching it on account of the rattling noise of the stones. Then a Koracha was asked to do the job, but he was given a knotted serpent, and as the precious stones were tightly packed in their place by knots, no rattling noise was heard ; and he boldly took it and split it like a bamboo and made a cradle. Both the tribes were hence forth enjoined to live by making bamboo wicker work ; but the Medar still goes about in a gingerly manner, and split his bamboos from the bottom, while the Korcha does it from his bamboos starting from the top. As a reward for the cradle made by him, Parvati, presented the Koracha with a divine rod of the bomboo, and a window which she has been using herself for future-telling and this is how the profession has come down to them" (*opcit* : 585).

Thus there are many stories regarding the origin of the Yerukula, but all these are originated through mythology.

1. A report entitled, 'The tribes of Andhra Pradesh, prepared and printed by the Tribal Cultural Research and Training Institute, Hyderabad, India, P. 12 (n. d).

PHYSICAL SETTING AND DEMOGRAPHY

Before proceeding to the description of the two villages Epilapalli and Ananthasagaram, the origin, location, and the history of the Anantapur district as an administrative unit are briefly presented.

Anantapur district

The district derives its name from Anantapur, its headquarters town. It is generally held that Anantapur is known after the big tank, Ananthasagaram (boundless ocean) near the western and eastern sluices of the villages of Ananthasagarm (At present known as Kotha Cheruvu) and Bukkaraya samudram, which were constructed by Chikkavodeya, who was the minister of Bukka I (A. D. 1344-1377)¹, the Vijayanagar ruler.

The district lies western most in Andhra Pradesh state, between 13° and $15^{\circ}14'$ North and $76^{\circ}47'$ and $78^{\circ}26'$ East. It is bounded on the north by the districts of Bellary and Kurnool, on the east by Cuddapah and Chittoor and on the south and west by the Karnataka state. Its elevation towards the south is about 2,200 feet while it gradually declines to about 1,000 feet at Gooty in the north and to 900 feet at Tadpatri in the north-east. The eastern side of the district towards Cuddapah is particularly hilly. The soils of the assessed land have been classified under six heads *viz.*, black clay, black loam, black sand, red clay, red loam and red sand.

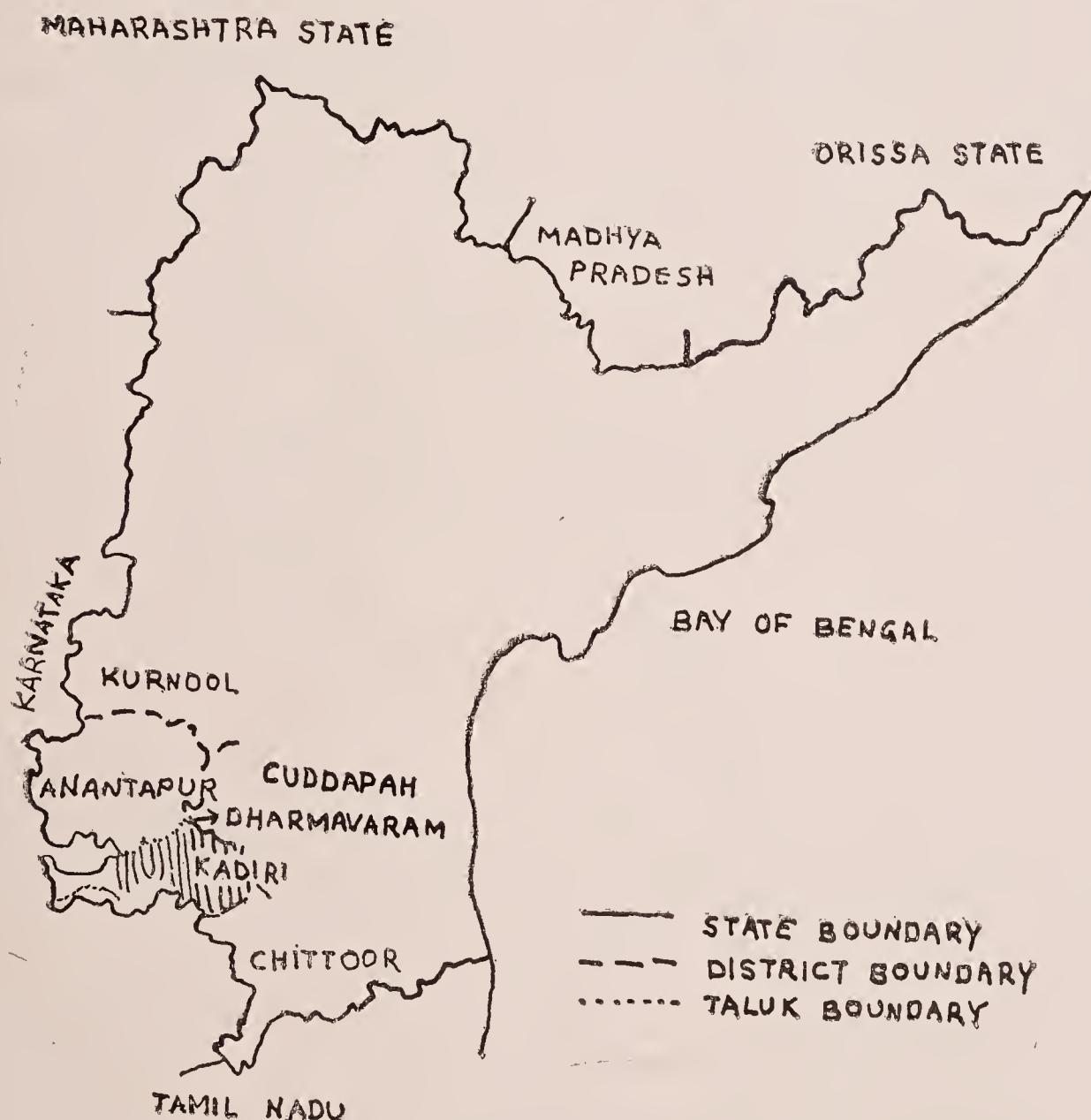
History of the district

The district, as it now stands, is not a homogeneous administrative unit. Its various tracts were ruled by different dynasties prior to the advent of the Vijayanagar Kings. Immediately before its conquest by Bukka I, the founder of the Vijayanagar empire, Penukonda, with its dependent territories of Madakasira, Hindupur and Penukonda taluks, was under the

1. Epigraphical report of 1906 and Epigraphia Carnatica, Vol. X.

Hoysalas. As the Vijayanagar empire expanded in the whole of the district, as now constituted, came under its rule. Subsequently, a substantial portion of the district came under the rule of *Palegars* who owed a shifting allegiance to the more powerful of the rulers like the Golconda and Cuddapah Nawabs and the Maharattas. Later on it came into the possession of the Hyder and Tippu².

ANDHRA PRADESH LOCATION OF DISTRICT AND TWO TALUKS

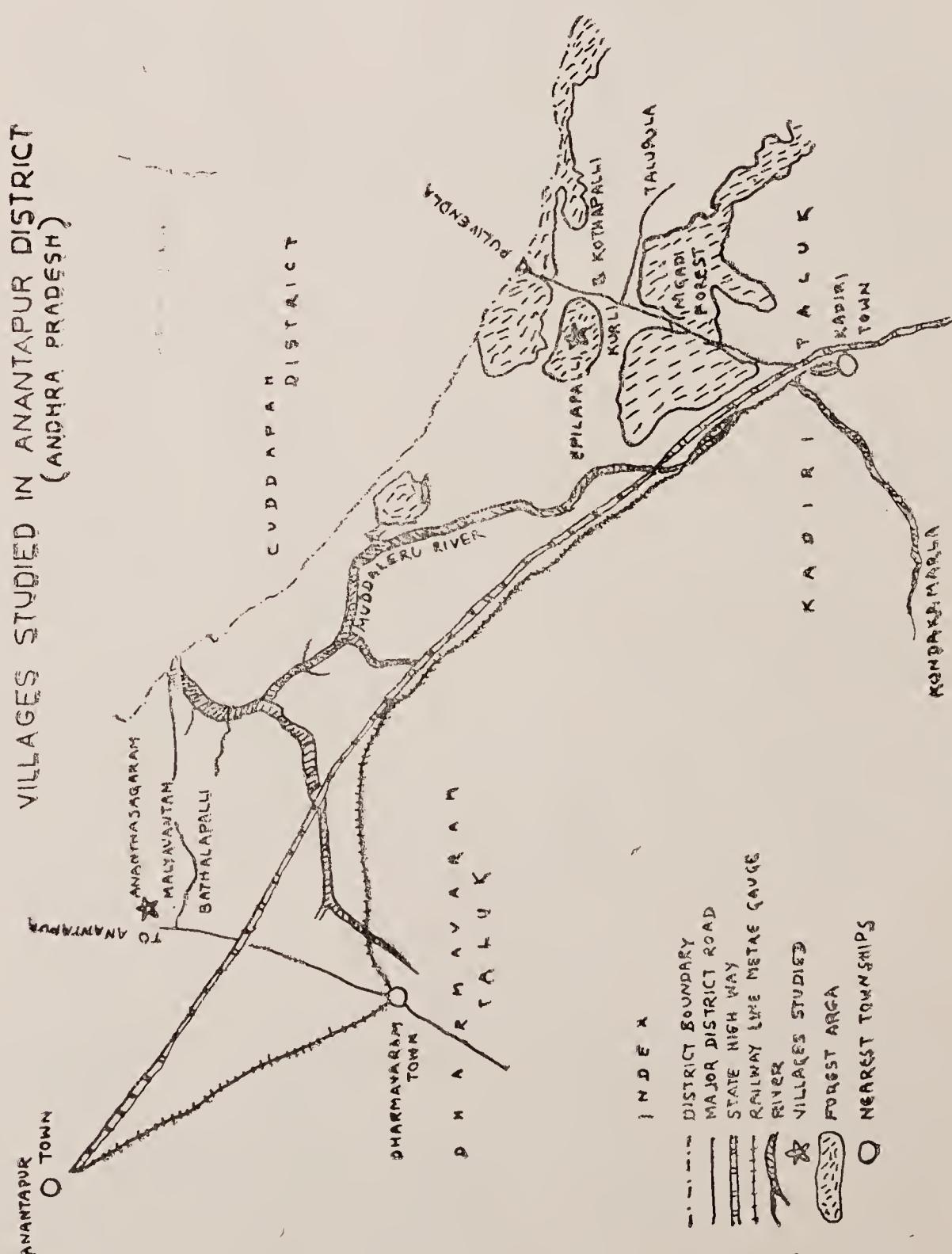


Map No. 1

In accordance with the treaty of Seringapatam (1792), Tippu Sultan ceded to the Nizam the entire area. In 1800, a fresh treaty was concluded between the British and the Nizam by which the latter agreed to cede to the former, the districts acquired by him in 1792 and 1799

2. Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh District Gazetteers, Hyderabad, A. P. 1970 pp. 3-4.

in return for a British force to be stationed at Hyderabad. These areas constitute the present Cuddapah, Kurnool, Anantapur Bellary and Chittoor districts or portions thereof. After these districts had been ceded to the East India Company in 1800, the Government of Madras appointed Sri Thomas Munro as the Principal collector for the area and divided it into 37 taluks. In 1807, following Munro's resignation, Government directed that the area be divided into three divisions by fixing Bellary, Cuddapah and Kodikonda as the headquarter stations of the three collectorates. But in 1808, with the abolition of the Kodikonda division, the Ceded districts were bifurcated into the Bellary and the Cuddapah 'Zillahs' (districts). Later, the years 1881 and 1882 formed a landmark in the administrative history of the district as they witnessed the bifurcation of the Bellary district and the



Map No. 2

constitution of the new district of 'Anantapur'. Based on W.S. Meyer's recommendation of 1904, the entire taluk of Kadiri, then in Cuddapah district, was transferred in 1910 to the Anantapur district. In 1916, the boundaries of Gorwikanama and Dorigallu reserve forests were readjusted as between the taluks of Kadiri and Pulivendla. Again in 1943, consequent on similar readjustment of forest reserve areas, the territorial limits of Anantapur and Cuddapah districts had undergone a change. From 1st October 1953, under the Andhra state Act, the entire taluk of Rayadrug was transferred from Bellary to this district. With all these subsequent changes, at present the Anantapur district comprises 11 taluks including Uravakonda, an independent sub-taluk.

Its taluks can be grouped into three natural divisions, Gooty, Tadpatri and Uravakonda in the north with large areas of black cotton soils forming the first, Anantapur, Kalyandrug, Rayadrug, Dharmavaram, Kadiri and Penukonda in the centre with their arid treeless expanses of unfertile soils constituting the second and Hindupur and Madakasira in the south, with their comparatively less fertile soils, forming the third.

The area and population of Andhra Pradesh state, Anantapur district and selected taluks of Kadiri and Dharmavaram are given in the Table 1 (according to 1971 census).

THE VILLAGES

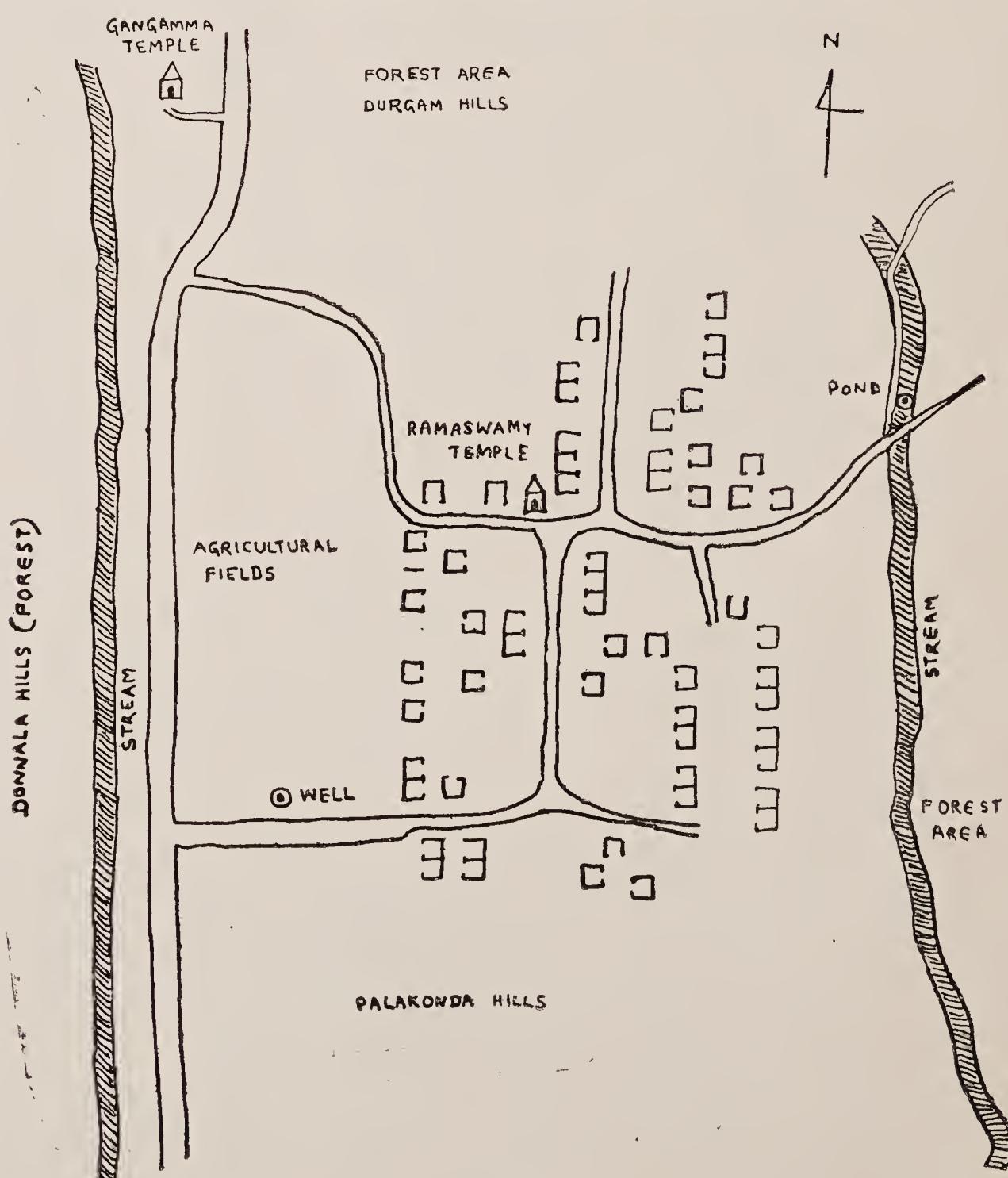
Epilapalli

The village Epilapalli is said to be founded by Sri Poojari Jejeppa, a Yerukula from Kondakamarla firka of Kadiri taluk some sixty years back. As it is said Sri Poojari Jejeppa had come to Durgam hills with his friends Sri Manka Nagappa and Sri Mota Venkatappa to collect curry leaves and also alongwith them they had brought their live stock for grazing. During these frequent visits to this place, Sri Jejeppa observed that the cattle used to converge to a particular spot for grazing. He tried his level best to diverge the cattle from grazing at that spot, but he did not succeed in this effort. His friends constructed a temporary hut for Sri Jejeppa to take rest as he fell ill suddenly, when he had brought his live stock for grazing to this place. Before his death, he had asked his family members to come to Durgam hills to see him at his new hut. After his death he was buried nearby the hut. Then his family members and others alongwith their live stock constructed

their own huts around Sri Jejeppa's hut. Slowly from then onwards this place was called by the neighbours as *Jejeppa Kottalu* (Jejeppa's huts) and in due course of time it changed to *Epilapalli* for administrative convenience. Even today the people living in other villages call Epilapalli as *Yerukula gudiselu* (Yerukula's houses) because only the Yerukula are inhabiting the village.

The village Epilapalli is situated in Kadiri east division of Kadiri taluk of Anantapur district at $14^{\circ} 12'$ East longitude. It lies at a distance of 33.5 kms. to east of Kadiri town and 8 kms. from B. Kothapalli, a village which is situated on Kadiri-Pulivendla road. Also this village is located

EPILAPALLI: YERUKULA SETTLEMENT



PHYSICAL SETTING AND DEMOGRAPHY

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Table 1 : The details of the area and population of Andhra Pradesh state, Anantapur district and selected two taluks

State, district and two taluk	Area in sq. kms.			Population per sq. km.			Population		
	Total	Rural	Urban	Persons	Male	Female	Total	Rural	Urban
Andhra Pradesh	2,76,754.0	157	43,502,708	22,008,663	21,494,045				
	2,73,192.2	128	35,100,181	17,698,247	17,401,934				
	3,561.8	2,360	8,402,527	4,310,416	4,092,111				
Anantapur district	19,125.0	111	2,115,321	1,086,233	1,029,088				
	18,758.9	93	1,739,531	892,283	847,248				
	366.1	1,027	375,790	193,950	181,840				
Kadiri taluk	2,996.6	102	304,611	156,171	148,440				
	2,943.3	92	270,801	138,925	131,876				
	53.3	635	33,810	17,246	16,564				
Dharmaaram taluk	1,906.2	91	172,780	88,391	84,389				
	1,869.8	76	141,904	72,623	69,281				
	36.4	848	30,876	15,768	15,108				

amidst huge hills surrounded on the east and south by Palakonda hills and its north and west sides are by *Durgamkonda* hills and *Donnata Konda* hills respectively. The Palakonda hills are the most extensive of the ranges lying in Cuddapah district. This range runs in a south easterly direction along the borders of Pulivendla and Kadiri taluks and soon attains an altitude of over 1,750 feet. From its initial course, it presents a ridge towards the uplands and a scarp along the higher slopes, improving in vegetation around a few villages including Epilapalli.

The forest around the village is situated on the principal hill range of Palakonda and Durgam hills. The forest is of a dry deciduous type and fall under Terai or fuel forest. The climatic and geographical conditions of the village and the economy of the Yerukula of the village have a direct bearing on its flora. The following are a few common trees and shrubs that are found in this area : (Totally I collected the names of 72 floral species in Epilapalli forest area but here I am giving only 30 species in accordance with the relevance of the data).

<i>Botanical name</i>		<i>Telugu name</i>
<i>Acacia concinna</i>	...	Seekayi
<i>Agave americana</i>	...	Kalabanda
<i>Atlantia monophylla</i>	...	Adavi nimma
<i>Bambusa arundinacea</i>	...	Mulla veduru
<i>Buchanania latifolia</i>	...	Sara
<i>Butea frondosa</i>	...	Moduga
<i>Caesalpinia bonducella</i>	...	Gatcha kayi
<i>Cochlospernum gossypium</i>	...	Konda gogu
<i>Combretum ovalifolium</i>	...	Yeda theega
<i>Dalbergia lanceolaria</i>	...	Nagula patchari
<i>Dalbergia paniculata</i>	...	Patchari
<i>Desmodium pulchellum</i>	...	Paredu (Konda teega)
<i>Disspysos chloroxylon</i>	...	Pedda ulindi
<i>Erythroxylon monogynum</i>	...	Devadaru
<i>Feronia elephantum</i>	...	Velaga
<i>Iachnocarpus frutesens</i>	...	Nalla theega
<i>Maba buxifolia</i>	...	Utti
<i>Mimusops hexandra</i>	...	Pala
<i>Murraya Koenigii</i>	...	Kari vepaku
<i>Pergularia daemia</i>	...	Dussaru teega

<i>Botanical name</i>		<i>Telugu name</i>
<i>Phyllanthus emblica</i>	...	Urisi
<i>Sapindus emarginatus</i>	...	Kum kudu
<i>Solanum imicum</i>	...	Usthikaya
<i>Terminalia billerica</i>	...	Thandra
<i>Terminalia chebula</i>	...	Karakkayi
<i>Vitex altissima</i>	...	Nemal adugu
<i>Vitis quadrangularis</i>	...	Nelleru
<i>Webera corymbosa</i>	...	Kommi
<i>Zizyphus jujuba</i>	...	Regi
<i>Zizyphus oenoplia</i>	...	Pariki etc.,

In this area most of the vertebrate fauna is present. A few are *Hespette se dwardsii* (Mongoosa), *Hestria lincura* (Porcupine—Munlda pandi), *Melursus Ursinus* (Bear), *Suscristatus* (wild bear) etc.

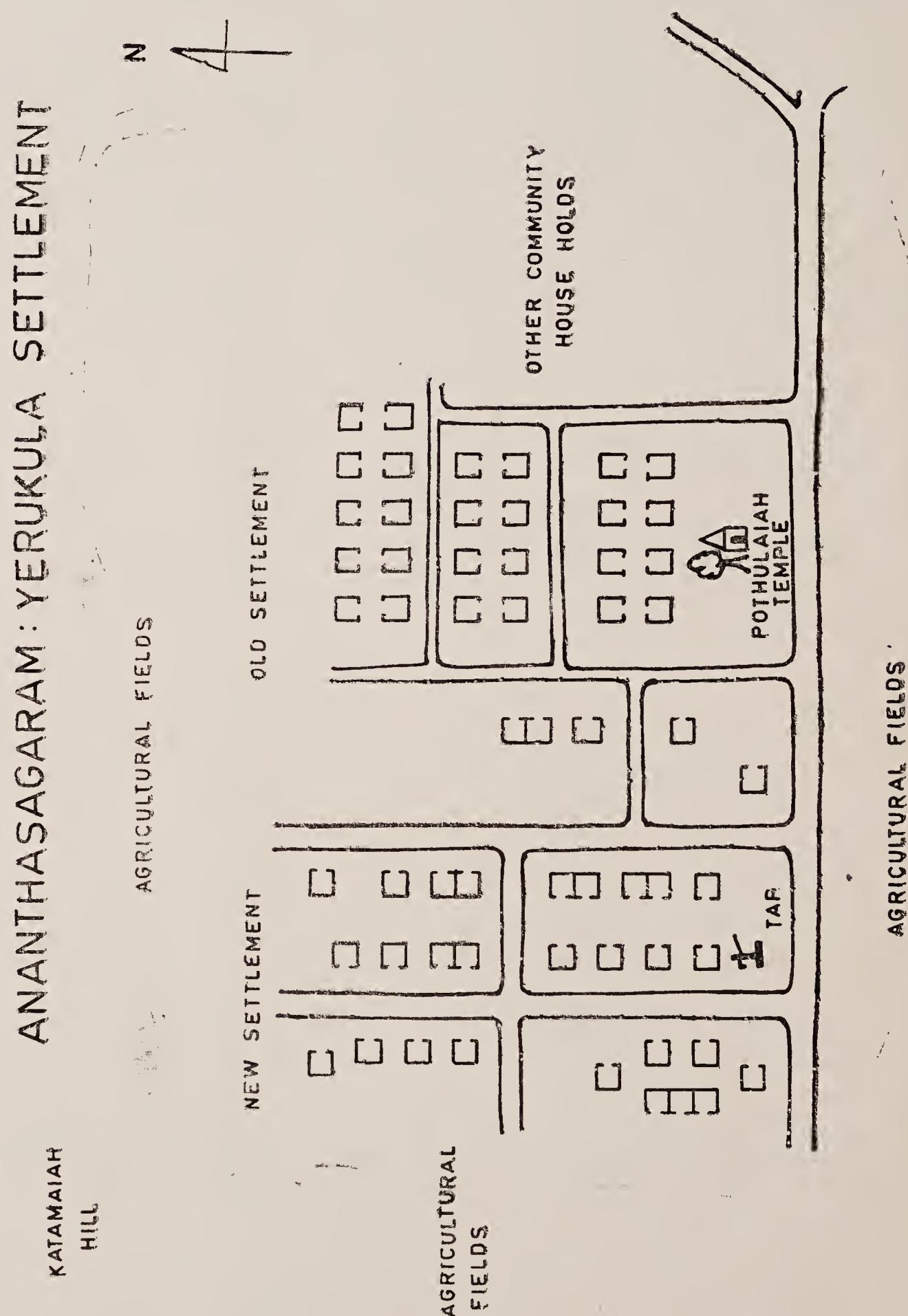
The average annual rainfall in this area is 685.5 mm (26.99 inches). The rainfall is mostly confined to the months of May to November. The highest temperature is 42.2°C (108.0°F) and minimum is 12.2°C (54.0°F). In the summer season the relative humidity is generally 50 to 60 per cent in the morning and 35 to 40 per cent in the afternoon. Winds are generally light to moderate with some strengthening in the South-West monsoon season.

The village comes under the jurisdiction of the statutory village panchayat located at Codulapalli. In the broad social sense, however, the Epilapalli people have more intimate ties with the villagers of Gollapalli (a sugali tanda), Odulapalli, Dampalli Subanaguntapalli, Pipedu, B. Kothapalli, Kurli etc., in the neighbourhood. The main weekly market for the Yerukula is at Pulivendla a nearby town which is in Cuddapah district. Only a foot path connects Epilapalli with the surrounding villages and with great difficulty a bullock cart can enter the village. Only one small well and a small pond provide drinking water for all the Yerukula. There is no electricity in this village.

Ananthasagaram

Historical records relating to the actual founding of the Ananthasagaram village are not available, but the elderly people have some information regarding its past history as it was known to them by their ancestors. The village of Ananthasagaram owes its name as a boundless ocean because, according to them, the place of the original village was nothing but a big

tank which serves to many villagers. But actually there is no trace of tank at present within or nearby.



Map No. 4.

The village Ananthasagaram is situated in Tadimarri firka of Dharmavaram taluk at $14^{\circ} 40'$ North latitude and $57^{\circ} 52'$ East longitude. It lies at a distance of 22.4 kms. to north-east direction of Dharmavaram town

and 3 kms. from Malyavantam, a main village which is situated on Bathalapall-Tadipatri road. The habitation area is encircled by isolated peaks and rocky clusters which is characteristic of the Deccan plateau. The hills which are nearby Ananthasagaram village are not comparable either in size or in height or even in thickness of vegetation with those of Epilapalli area. The forest is of a open type of shrub jungles with trees of an average height of about 15'. A few patches of dense growth can be noticed only in low lying portions. Except for such isolated patches, most of the areas are practically stony. It is said that previously this area consisted of thick shrubby jungles and some fruit bearing trees, but at present the flora of the area reflects some of the representative genera on a modest scale. Date palm (*eethaku*) is grown to a larger extent in this area. A few of the vertebrate fauna among wild life is present.

The average annual rainfall in this area is 544.1mm (21.42"). The highest temperature is 43.2° C and minimum is 14.2° C. The period from February to May is the driest part of the year when the relative humidities are 50-60 per cent in the mornings and 20-30 per cent in the afternoons. Humidities are higher in the South-West monsoon. Winds are generally light to moderate acquiring some strength in the South-West monsoon season.

The village comes under the jurisdiction of the statutory village panchayat located at Malyavantam. Ananthasagaram's more intimate ties, in the broad social sense, are with the villages of Venkatagaripalli, Lingaredipalli, Malyavantam, Bathalapalli, Sanjeevapuram etc., which are in the neighbourhood. The main weekly market for the people is at Dharmavaram. A rough metalled road connects Ananthasagaram from Malyavantam. The Yerukula have a separate bore-well-pump in their locality for drinking water. Irrigation through well is common in this village. There is electricity in this village. For irrigation purposes, some of the Yerukala cultivators have motor pump sets in their irrigation wells.

Demography of Epilapalli and Ananthasagaram

Epilapalli village is completely inhabited by the Yerukula only. There are no other castes or tribes in this village whereas Ananthasagaram village is a multicaste village. In this village the Yerukula are living along with other castes like Kuruba, Kamma, Vaddi, Achari, Kummarri, Chakali, Muslim etc. The sex-wise total population of the Yerukula in Epilapalli and Ananthasagaram villages are given in Table 2.

Table 2 : Details of the total population of Yerukulas of Epilapalli and Ananthasagaram villages (according to my census 1981).

Villages	Total No.		POPULATION			
	of House-holds	Persons	Male	%	Female	%
Epilapalli	55	291	142	48.80	149	51.20
Ananthasagaram	25	176	84	47.73	92	52.27

Marital status

It is also observed from Table 3 that there are 52 married males and 60 married females among the Yerukula in Epilapalli village. Between the age groups of 10 to 19 only one male but 14 females are married. There are 11 widows and 5 widowers among the population. The significant observation is that there are many multiple marriages among the males and females of the Yerukulas of this village which are shown in the Table 3.

It is seen from the Table 4 that in Ananthasagaram village there are 28 married males and 32 married females among the Yerukula of different ages in this village. There are 7 widows and 3 widowers among this tribe.

Literacy and education

Table 5 : Details of the literates among the Yerukula of Epilapalli and Ananthasagaram.

Villages	Total population		Literates				Non-literates			
	Male	Fem.	Male	%	Fem.	%	Male	%	Fem.	%
Epilapalli	142	149	19	13.38	4	2.68	123	86.62	145	97.32
Ananthasagaram	84	92	15	17.86	9	9.78	69	82.14	83	90.22

The above Table 5 shows that in Epilapalli out of 291 persons, 23 are literates and 268 are non-literates. By literate I mean those with and above elementary education. Sex-wise, among the total 142 males in Epilapalli 13.38 per cent are literates and 86.62 per cent are non-literates ; and among the females while 2.68 per cent are literates, 97.32 per cent are non-literates. In Ananthasagaram out of 176 persons, 24 are literates and 152 are non-literates. Sex-wise, among the total 84 males in the village 17.86 per cent

PHYSICAL SETTING AND DEMOGRAPHY

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Table 3 : Distribution of Yerukula population by Marital status in Epilapalli.

Table 4 : Distribution of Yerukula population by Marital status in Ananthasagaram

are educated and 82.14 per cent are uneducated ; and among the females while 9.78 per cent are educated, 90.22 per cent are uneducated.

The level of literacy and education in both the villages is depending upon the existing conditions of the elementary schools. In Epilapalli there is no school. The children from this village are supposed to go to P. S. elementary school situated at Gollapalli village at a distance of 2 kms. from Epilapalli. A single teacher is running this school in a dilapidated hut. During the rainy season, the Yerukula students from Epilapalli do not go to the school because of the river which passes in between these two villages. This leads to many dropouts among the Yerukula students. Whereas in Ananthasagaram, a single teacher, who comes from Bathalapalli village runs his elementary school under a tree, because there is no house or hut allotted for the school. Here Yerukula settlers are relatively less educated as compared to the other castes.

MATERIAL CULTURE

Before proceeding to the analytical description of the tribal economy of the Yerukula, it is necessary to understand the material culture of the Yerukula. This chapter deals with a brief description on the material culture of the Yerukula of both the studied villages not only from the point of the materials themselves, but for sources of invention and the way of diffusion of the artefacts.

Residential pattern : The house

The Epilapalli village is not built according to a definite plan. The dwellings in Epilapalli can be classified into two main groups : *midde* and *kottamu*. The *midde*, which is a pucca house made of stones and bricks with a pucca roof. There are only two *midde* houses and all the other houses are *Kottamulu* which are further divided into *eethaku Kottamu* (made entirely with date palm leaves with tree trunk support) and *goda Kottamu* (made with stones and roof is laid with date palm leaves or grass). The pattern of the Yerukula houses in Epilapalli is shown in the Map No. 3.

Ananthasagaram is a multi-caste village, which was built according to a definite plan. Most of the households of the Kamma (Peasants), Vaddi (stone-cutters and building constructors), Achari (smith group), Kummarai (potters) Chakali (washerman) and Muslims (businessmen) occupy the centre of the habitat. The households of the Kuruba (peasants and shepherds) are on the northern side of the village while the households of the Yerukula occupy the complete southern side of the main village. The Yerukula locality is known as *Yerukula geri*. Under the newly introduced 'sites and services scheme' (Housing aid for tribals) the Block Development Office, Dharmavaram, allotted free sites for the Yerukula of this village. So in the year 1981, all the Yerukula constructed their houses in their newly allotted sites and occupied the same. The pattern of the Yerukula's old and new settlement in Ananthasagaram is shown in the Map No. 4. All the houses of the Yerukula are in the form of *goda Kottamu*, which are made with stones and bricks and roof is laid with date palm leaves or grass. But the speciality of the houses is

that they have compound. The Yerukula left sufficient space covered with compound wall all around, in front of their houses.

In Epilapalli village *midde* and *Kottamulu* are usually built around a square court yard which is open at one side. Some are slightly smaller, other larger, according to the size of the families living in them. The *Kottamu* or hut is small and compact. A few are conical and others are oblong. It is erected usually with the assistance of one or two nearest kinsmen along with one's own family members. Almost all the materials needed for the *Kottamu* are secured from the Palakonda hills free of cost. The Yerukula are good at handling bamboo and weaving the bamboo splints into a wattle. When a Yerukula selects a site for a new house, he first measures out the area he requires. He prefers as the site for his new house a slightly elevated plot which is normally adjacent to their relatives. After constructing the house, the Yerukula, however, observe formalities at the time of first entry into the house. Wednesday and Saturday are considered to be auspicious days. Before entry into the new house, amidst his invitees, the head of the family breaks a coconut and offers a fowl in the name of the family deity.

In Ananthasagaram village, the conical huts are now being replaced by *goda Kattamu*. The Yerukula here, construct their houses by using the materials which are purchased by them in the market. Their *goda Kottamulu* are two roomed houses with wattle walls and date palm or grassroof.

Yerukula houses of Ananthasagaram are usually neat and clean, though less so than the houses of Epilapalli Yerukulas. The latter always wash their houses and keep them spotlessly clean. Also the immediate surroundings are kept clean and may not be used, as in many multi caste tribal villages like Ananthasagaram, as latrines. Nor are the village lanes used for defecation ; for this purpose the Yerukula go into the agricultural fields.

Household utensils

Wada : To one side of the room—there is generally only one room in a Yerukula house in Epilapalli, at the right side of the door as shown in figure 2. We find one or two clay receptacles for the storage of grain, called *Wada*—They are usually round and of various size, some small and only four feet high called *Pedda Wada*. When the *Wada* is full, the cover is placed on the top and all fissures and holes are carefully blocked with a coating of fresh cow-dung or lime to make the grain-bin air tight. Through a hole near the bottom of the *Wada*, the daily quota of grain which a family required is re-

moved. After use, the hole is sealed with a ragball. The *Wadalu* or grain bins are placed in the room in such a way as to shut off the fire place and the inner portion from that near the door. This partition also gives some privacy to the Yerukula parents who sleep on one side of the bins, while their grown up children sleep on the other side out of sight. The *Wadalu* are

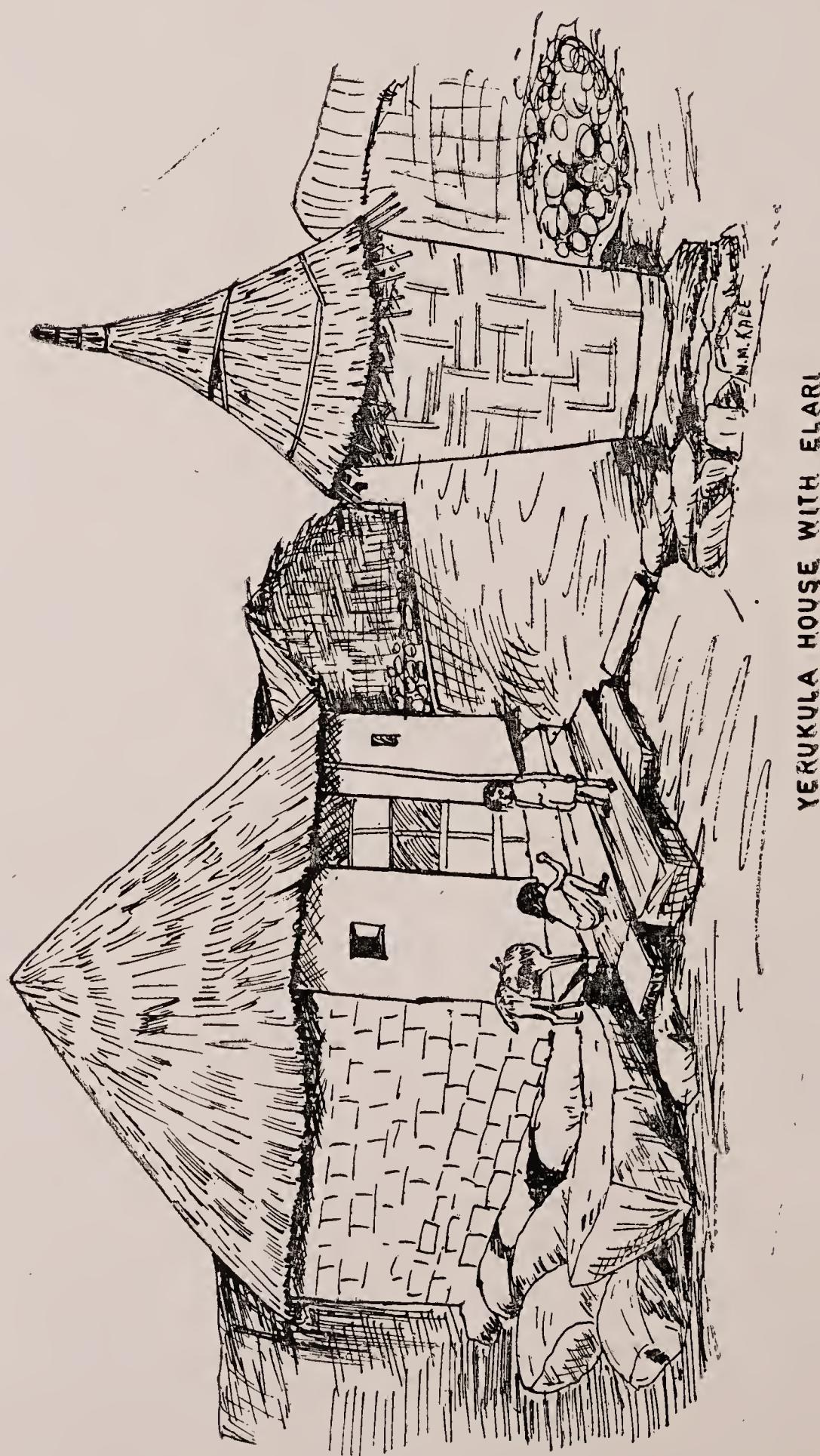


Fig. 1.

absent in the houses of Ananthasagaram Yerukulas. They preserve their grain in bags and in vessels. In Epilapalli, the Yerukula also use *elari* (Figure. 1) which is kept outside the house to store grain.

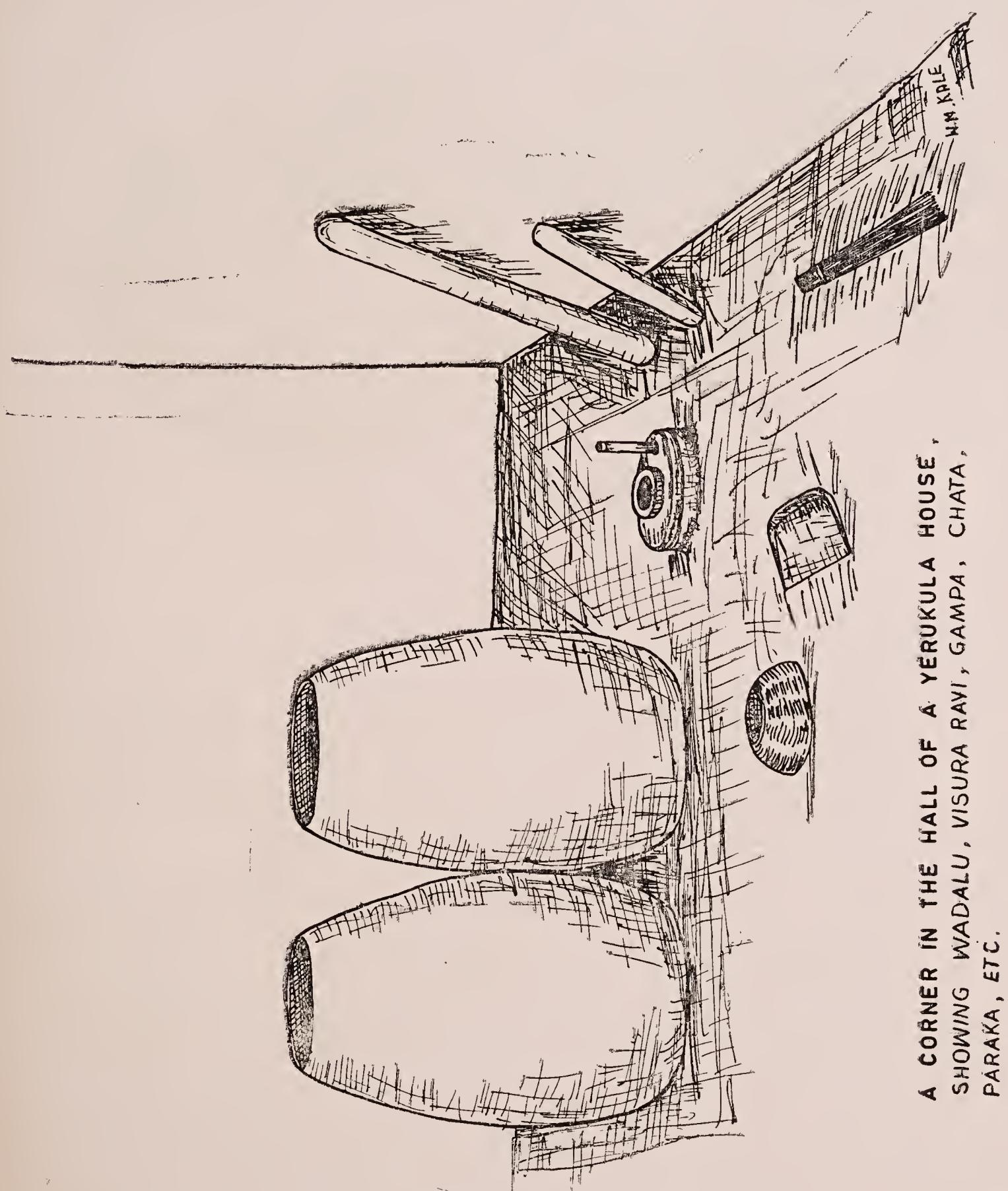


Fig. 2.

Visura rayi : The Yerukula use *visura rayi* as grinding mill for soft grains like rice, ragi, etc. The *visura rayi* consists of two circular discs each cut out of a single piece of stone. The bottom of the upper stone which is thicker and heavier, is rough, made so by holes being cut into it with a

pointed chisel. The upper stone revolves on a strong iron pin fixed in the centre of lower stone. To allow the upper stone to rotate and also to feed the mill with grain, a hole, a few inches wide is cut through the centre of the upper stone.



VEDURU GAMPALU

Fig. 3.

The Yerukula woman doing the grinding sits on the floor, one leg stretched out, the other drawn in, the shin resting against the mill. The stone mill is turned with one hand while with the other the woman pours the grain in fistfuls into the hole in the centre of the upper stone.

Rokali : It is a grain-pestle used to husk the grain superficially in the *rayi rolu* (stone mortar). For a clean husking the grain must be pounded with the rokall. It is a heavy log of wood, round about six inches thick, slightly thinner at the top, with a notch around the middle to allow the pounding women a firmer grip.

Chata : After the grain has been ground and pounded, it is cleaned of the bran with the winnowing scoop called as *Chata*. The *chata* is a square plate with raised edges at three sides like a shovel, and made of tightly plaited bamboo blades.

Gampalu : Fig. 3 : The Yerukula of Epilapalli who live so close to the forest, naturally use the material at hand for all the article which they require in their daily use. Baskets of various types manufactured from the

material abundantly at hand, replace containers which the Yerukula of Ananthasagaram with different environments would make out of other materials. The Yerukula of Epilapalli make baskets of every possible shape and form from bamboo strips, grass blades and twigs; large and small.

Kundalu (pots) : The Yerukula of Epilapalli usually cook their food in *matti kundalu* (earthern pots). The vessels in which the water is fetched from the well or pond are always of burnt clay. They buy at the weekly market at Pulivendla town. In Ananthasagaram, the Yerukula cook their food in aluminium and brass vessels.

Besides these, in both villages, other utensils like an aluminium plate for eating, a tumbler for drinking water or a *chembu* for holding smaller quantities of water are also found in almost every house. The Yerukula of Ananthasagaram now-a-days started to use plastic vessels for all purposes which is absent in Epilapalli village. Steel trunks are used for keeping clothes by a few households. Use of mirror and hurricane lantern is found among a few households.

The hearth inside the house is prepared by making a dug out stove using a bare set of three stones. In a very few cases in Epilapalli there are plastered oven with mud to support the cooking utensils. In Ananthasagaram, a few Yerukulas are using kerosene stoves for cooking, which is an act of wonder for the Yerukula of Epilapalli.

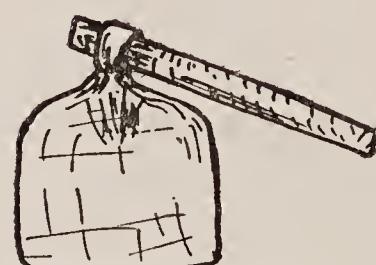
Weapons and implements

Goddali : (Fig. 4). It is an axe which has a heavy rectangular blade, with a cutting edge three or four inches broad. This axe is used for chopping wood, felling trees, etc. Any Yerukula man going to the forest or to his field carries the *goddali* on his shoulders. It is also used for self-defence against wild animals.

Sora Kathi : It is a kind of ceremonial axe with a slim, slightly curved blade, similar to a battle axe. This axe is mainly used for killing and skinning animals, for cutting up the meat and so on.

Para : (Fig. 4). This consists of a flat iron pice which is secured to a long bamboo shaft of two to three feet long by inserting the flat spike into an end of the handle which is bound over with an iron ring. This is used while working in the field to loosen the soil.

Kara Pera : This consists of a strong iron rod of about $1 \frac{1}{4}'$ long fixed to a fairly thick bamboo shaft of 2' to 3' long. It is used for loosening the surface of the ground and digging out roots and tubers.



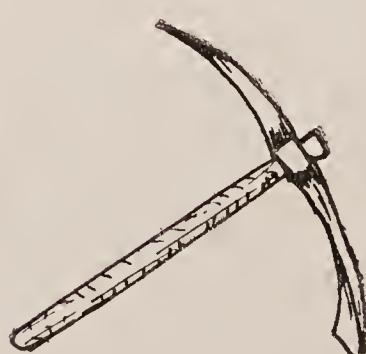
PARA



GODDALI



KODAVALI



PIKASI

WEAPONS AND IMPLEMENTS

Fig. 4.

Pikasi : (Fig. 4). For digging in stony soil a *pikasi* (pickaxe) may be used which is a long iron rod with one end pointed and at the other broad blade fixed to the thick bamboo shaft in the middle.

Kodavali : (Sickle—Fig. 4). This is not different from the one in use in the adjoining plains and is used by the Yerukula of both villages for cutting grass and the stalks of their crops or thatching grass for roofing the hut. Sometimes, it is also used when they work as agricultural labourers.

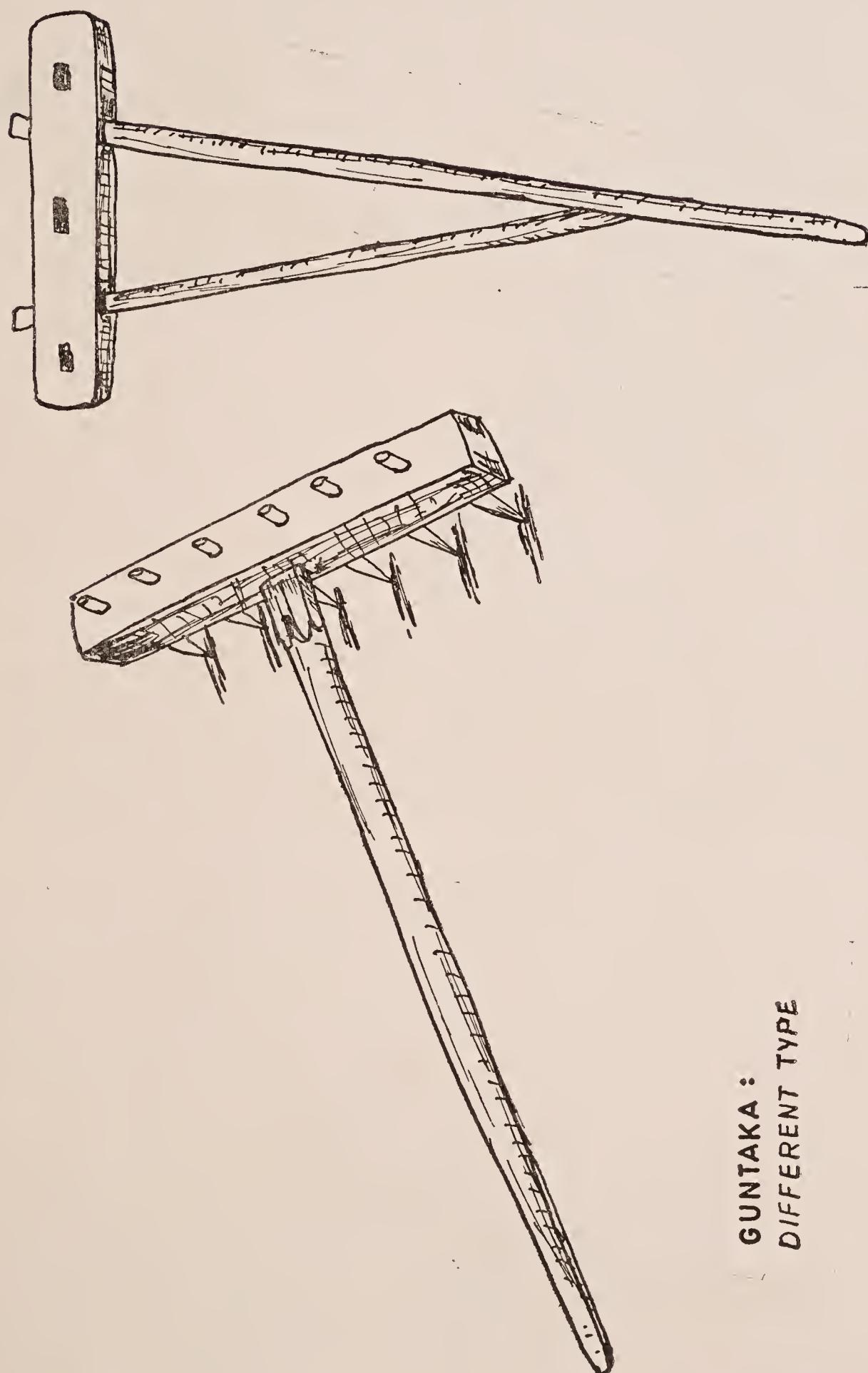
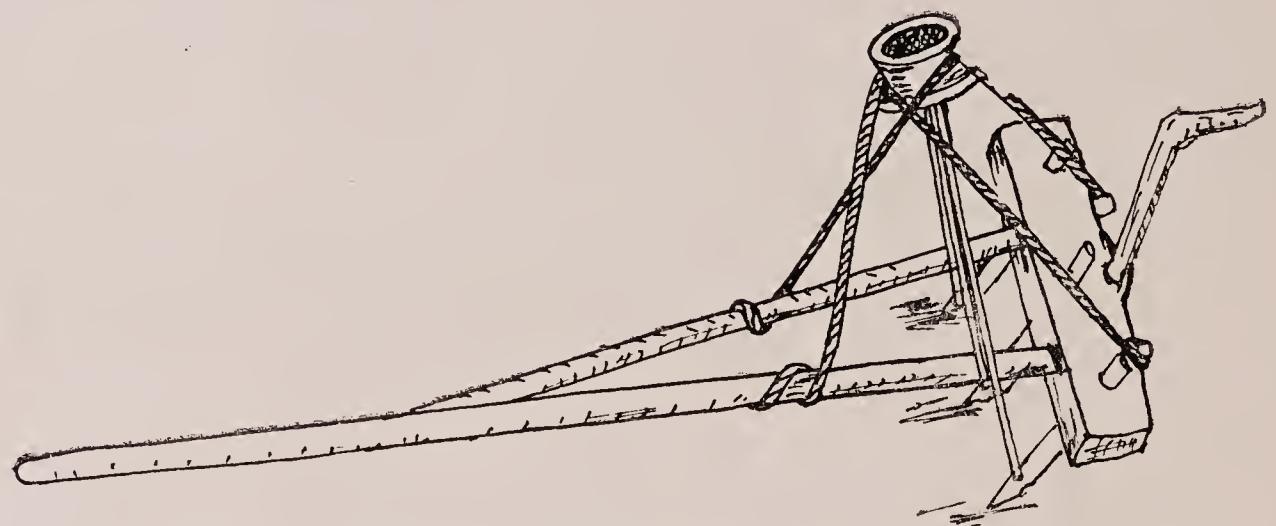


Fig. 5.

ting grass and the stalks of their crops or thatching grass for roofing the hut. Sometimes, it is also used when they work as agricultural labourers.

The Yerukula cultivators use their agricultural implements for various activities. The agricultural operations start with first ploughing in May. The cultivable land is ploughed with *madaka* (plough) at least two times. When tilled land is watered by rain ploughing operations are repeated with



GURRU : THE SOWING - PLOUGH WITH THREE COULTERS

Fig. 6.

cheyi danti (a harrow with a horizontal blade covered at the ends and fixed to a wooden board. Soon after the completion of second ploughing, seeds are sown with gorru (a seed drill with three or four coulters as shown in Fig). The Yerukula use different *guntaka* for different operations of the field.

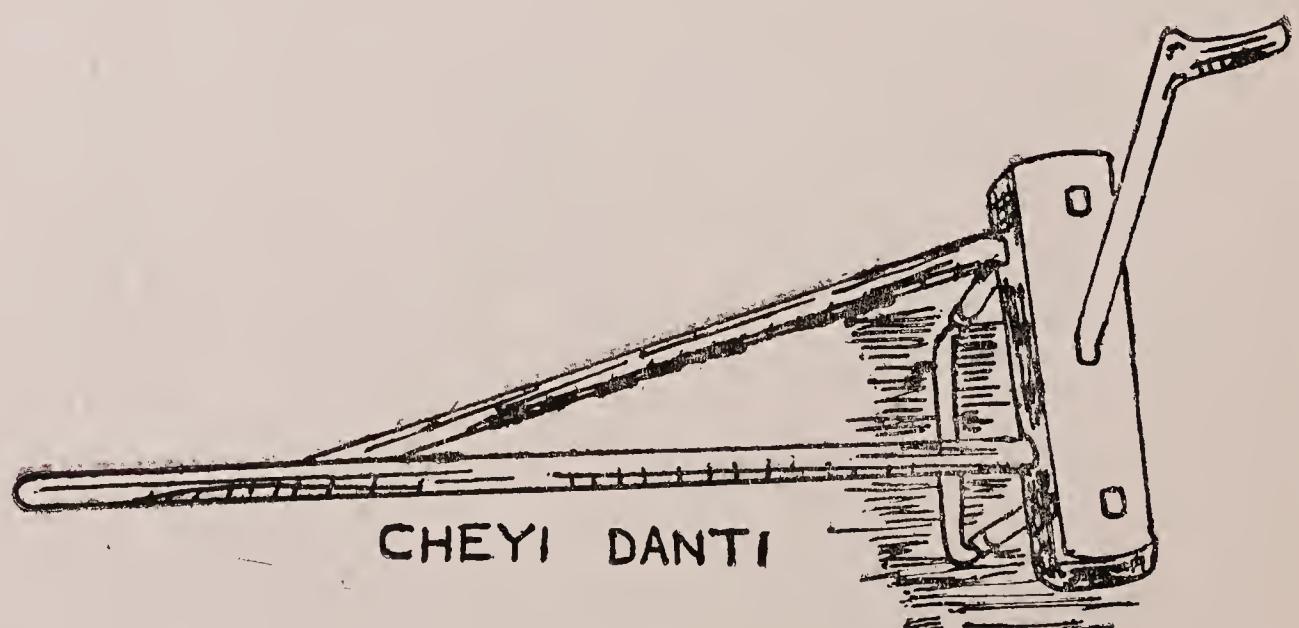


Fig. 7.

Kodamu : (Fig. 8). It is a type of fishing equipment, made out of bamboo splinters and *ari* fibre. This has the shape of a big bag with a round bamboo hoop at the brim and a long bamboo pole tied across its mouth. This is held against the current of the river and any fishes caught in the *Kodamu* are held in it by the force of the running water. This net is used with advantage in a swift flowing river and in the muddy water of the early monsoon.

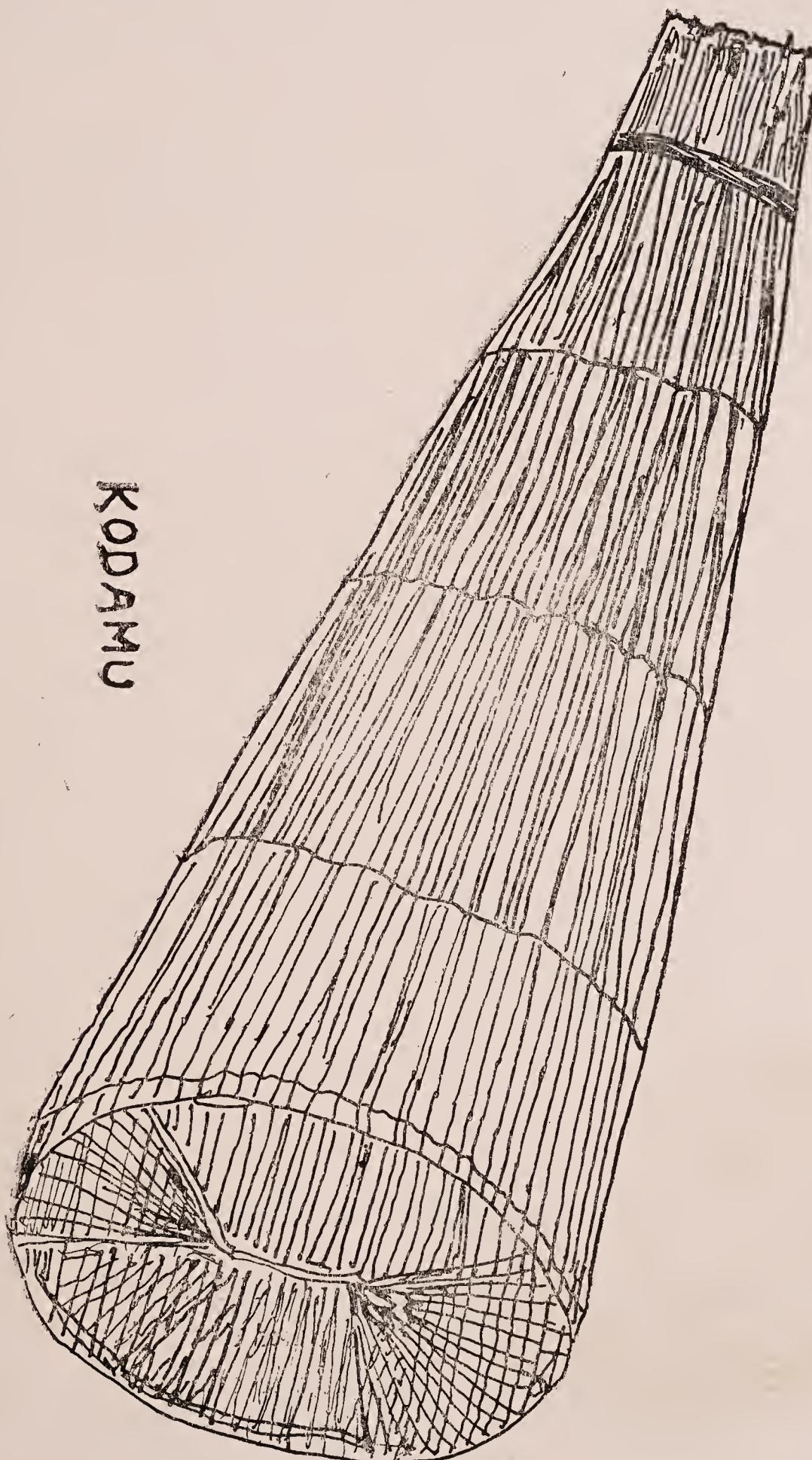


Fig. 8.

Musical instruments

The Yerukula use wind instruments as their musical instruments. They are *pullagoya* and *sora goya*.

Pullagoya : It is a bamboo flute, i.e., a bamboo stem with shelved mouth piece and four or five stops. Its overall length is 22 cms. (see Fig 9A).

Burra goyya is a ‘naga swaram’, with two pipes of stout reed inserted into a bottle shaped gourd and secured with resin as shown in Fig 9B. The lower reed is supplied with four stops, the instrument is blown vertically. Its average length is 34 cms.

Dress and ornaments

In Epilapalli village, the Yerukula dress very scantily. The dress of the men particularly of the older generation, living at present, continues to be as scanty as it used to be. It consists of a mere strip of cloth called *gochi batta* passed in between the legs to cover the nudity and the ends of the cloth are secured by passing it over a waist string. The middle aged men wear a shirt, *angi* and wear *panchi* around the waist covering knee of the legs. At home and in the village, the Yerukula wear a head-cover ; at the most they wrap a piece of old cloth or towel around the head, leaving the middle of the skull bare. The Yerukula get the clothes from the merchants of the towns nearby. The dress habits of the Yerukula women in Epilapalli have not changed much. A short saree is worn round the body in an uncouth way without many folds or pleats unlike the mode of wearing of a saree by the women of the other castes. A simple bodice or *ravika* is worn to cover the upper part of the body. The ends of the *ravika* are secured by being tied into a knot in front. Generally elder women of the Yerukula do not wear a bodice or jacket. They do not seem to have much incentive to improve their dress and appearance unless they find it necessary.

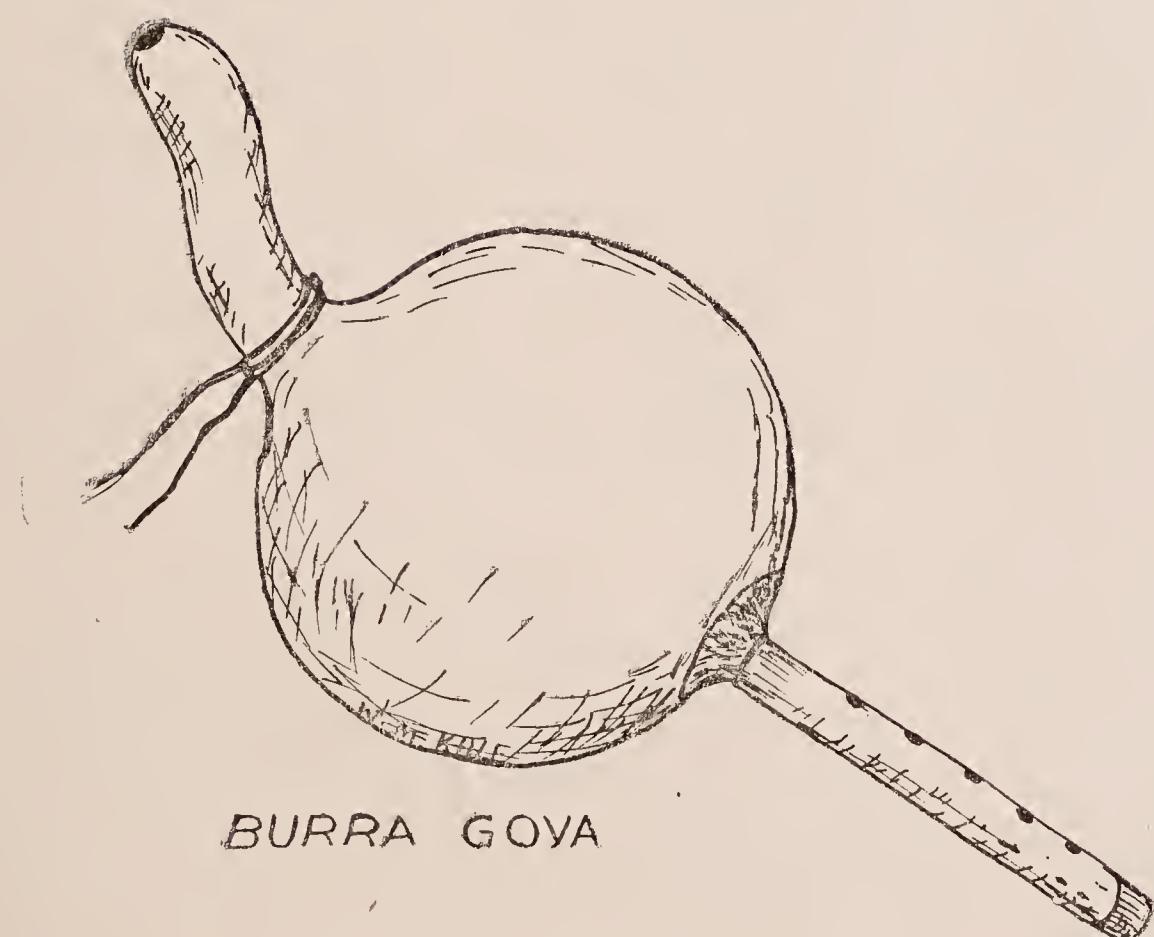
In Ananthasagaram, the Yerukula men take to the habit of wearing knickers with the close association of the other dominant castes. They have started dressing their children like those of the other castes. The girls wear *Pavada* or *Parikini* (a sort of skirt) purchased from the market of Dharmavaram and nearby towns.

Generally, men do not wear any ornaments as such except small rings. On the third or little finger of either hand they sometimes wear a ring of

Fig. 9A.



PULLA GOYA



BURRA GOYA

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Fig. 9B.

silver or brass. It is called *Ungaramu*. A few elder Yerukulas wear rings in their lobes of ears called *chevi pogulu*. The Yerukula married men in Epilapalli do not wear ankle rings, but they put a single silver ring on the second toe of right foot. It is called *Kalimettu*. This we won't find among the Yerukula of Ananthasagaram village.

The ornaments of women are also very few and of very poor quality. However, the women who can afford have started to wear *chevi Kammalu* (ear rings), *mukku Nathulu* (nose rings), *Jumkeelu* (rich decorative ear rings). *Dabu* (a silver belt worn on the waist) *Vanki Ungaramu* (finger rings) etc. *Mettulu* (toe ring), a string of black beads with or without *tali* are the symbols of married status as far as women's ornaments are concerned. Glass bangles called *gajulu* are prohibited for the widows.

While generally all Yerukula women are fond of wearing jewels and ornaments, their husbands or parents usually find it difficult to present them with such. Their financial position in most cases is so bad that they can ill afford to buy costly ornaments. Expensive ornaments which a woman displays are a sign of wealth and give social prestige in Yerukula community. A woman's ornaments are family property ; she has no personal right over them and may not sell them or give them away unless they have been given to her as personal wedding presents (*muyyilu*).

All the ornaments which the Yerukula women of Ananthasagaram wear are common among the non-tribal women of Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh. There is no doubt that they adopted them from the Hindu castes.

Tattooing : They call it as *Pachha*. It not only serves the purpose of decoration but also denotes their religious beliefs and social values. They believe that when one goes to the other world, i.e., after the death, he carries nothing but tattoo marks. It is compulsory for women, otherwise they cannot touch the cooking pot. Every girl is particularly tattooed before she gets married. It is also supposed that it gives protection from evil eye and it relieves bodily pains. A woman who attends to tattooing is generally paid in kind and is called as the *Pachha* woman.

THE YERUKULA TRIBAL ECONOMY

Economics, broadly defined for our purposes, is concerned with the allocation of resources, goods and services among alternative ends. Several anthropologists and sociologists felt that economy is an important constituent of the community life and plays a deciding role in the formation of the cultural and social structure of society.

D. N. Majumdar in his study 'The fortunes of primitive Tribes', states "Tribal social economy depends on a number of factors. A tribe must adapt itself to the area it inhabits. It must develop a relation of inter dependence with the fauna and flora of the habitat. Its success depends on its ability to live enjoying robust health, acquiring strength, in evolving an adjustment to the forces of environment so that its leisure born of security may provide scope for progress. Such is the result of regional adaptation. A tribe must be able to develop an organisation of its entire group-mind and group-behaviour through which efforts of individuals may be properly channelled and their maximum success assured. The pattern of organisation whether it should be hierarchical or democratic, is not very important. It is the efficiency with which it regulates individual behaviour that determines the quality of tribal economy, and survival of the tribe" (1944 : 209). This implies the economic structure in tribal communities is specifically different from that of the non-tribals or advanced groups of people. They have a very simple technology which fits well with their ecological surroundings.

Moreover, Dalton referred to tribal economy as 'subsistence type'. According to him subsistence or primitive economy gives the assurance of livelihood to persons through the social determination of labour and land allocation and the social right to receive emergency material in times of need and has the pervasive social control of production and distribution (1971 : 54). Majumdar states that the tribal people practise different types of occupations to sustain themselves and live on 'marginal economy'. In a marginal economy one group of people practises different types of occupations at one time for its livelihood (1961 : 139). The tribals of India belonging to different economic stages, from food gathering to industrial

labour which present their overlapping economic stage in the broader framework of the stages of economy. Vidyarthi emphasized that “a tribe is usually considered an economically independent group of people having their own specific economy and thus having a living pattern of labour, division of labour and specialization, gift and ceremonial exchange, trade and barter, credit and value, wealth consumption norms, capital formation, land tenure and good-tangible and intangible economic status. All these have their own speciality which identifies the tribal economy in the broader set up of Indian economy” (1976 : 96-97). Majumdar and Madan analysed the traits of a primitive economy, noticed in tribal India and noted that “the structure of economic activity is implied in the internal order that obtains in the inter relations between the people participating in the economic pursuits” (1970 : 191). Thus this chapter seeks to explain the tribal economy among the Yerukula in two different locations in terms of environment and adaptation. Before proceeding on to the structure of occupation and environment, let me touch briefly the endogamous groups of the Yerukula.

The Yerukula are divided into three large endogamous groups on the basis of their traditional occupations. These sub-divisions are :

- (1) Bidari Yerukula
- (2) Dabba Yerukula and
- : (3) Kunchi Yerukula
 - (i) Jakkala Yerukula
 - (ii) Pamula Yerukula
 - (iii) Kothula Yerukula

Bidari Yerukula

Bidari, means a wandering merchant. Bidari Yerukula's traditional occupation is trading. They engaged in trade, carrying rock salt, tamarind, curry leaf (*Murraya koenigii*) and pulses. They moved into the neighbour-in states like Tamilnadu and Karnataka in the south and Maharashtra in the north. In olden days these Bidari Yerukula moved from place to place with their commodities carried on the back of asses and bullocks. While mentioning about the occupation of these Yerukula, Ramesan wrote :

Before the advent of British in India, these tribes were also used by the Transport Department of the then Governments, to supply cattle

to the regiments in the frequent disturbances that occurred in the country : A sub-division of this tribe, viz., "Kabadi owned hundreds of asses, bullocks and barren cows, and utilized them in the transport of salt, grain... The introduction of the Railways proved a curse to them, since their traditional job, namely, transport, was taken away by the Railways, and hence they had to sell away their animals, and reduce themselves to object poverty".¹

The Bidari Yerukula also engage themselves in other traditional occupations such as business, basketry, making ropes and twines from forest fibers, slings and ropes for drawing water and tethering animals. In certain places a few of them are musicians also. The Bidari Yerukula who settled in plain villages and have taken to agriculture are also referred to by other caste people as Uri Yerukula (village Yerukula). The difference between Bidari Yerukula and Uri Yerukula is, the Uri Yerukula have forgotten completely their dialect, Yerukula basha, and they are Telugu speakers, and also they think that they are culturally superior to Bidari Yerukulas, who still live in remote areas with traditional wandering trade.

Dabba Yerukula

Dabba, Means bamboo stick. They are called Dabba Yerukula, because this group prepares baskets, thattis and cradles from bamboo sticks. They are mostly nomadic. But now-a-days some of them have settled in towns.

Kunchi Yerukula

Kunchi, means brush. Their main occupation is pig-rearing and preparation of Kunchelu (long big brushes used by local weavers for preparing the warp) and selling them. This group is otherwise known as Gadde Yerukula, as their women are engaged in *gadde* on *sodi*, i.e., fortune-telling, Their women generally go about the streets, calling out 'Yeruko, amma, Yeruko, i.e., prophecies, mother, prophecies. This group of Yerukula also prepare baskets and children's toys out of the palmyrah leaves. A few of them are also beggars. Though this group is also nomadic in nature, some of them are found to have settled permanently in some places. Under this group, three other Yerukula groups are included ; these are Jakkala Yerukula,

1. Ramesan, "A tribe in Andhra", in Daily Newspaper, The Hindu, dated January 31, 1960 cited in Census of India, 1961, Ethnographic notes, p.8.

Pamula Yerukula and Kothula Yerukula.

- (i) *Jakkala Yerukula* : Women of this group are proficient in tattooing and they move from place to place to earn their livelihood. Males rear pigs and sell pigs and pig-manure. They are also called 'Parik muggula valu'.
- (ii) *Pamula Yerukula* : This group is also nomadic and they catch snakes. These people are in the habit of performing magic locally known as *modi*. They are also called as 'pedditigolla varu'.
- (iii) *Kothula Yerukula* : This section of families are engaged in making the monkeys perform acrobatics. Hence they were called *Kothula* (monkey) Yerukula.

For the present study, field work was conducted among the Bidari Yerukula and Uri Yerukula in Epilapalli and Ananthasagaram villages respectively.

Occupation and environment

The recognition of a close relation between occupational structure and settlement should be taken to imply that the habitation will depend on the resources of the natural environment. In this analysis of primitive economics, Forde clearly mentioned that "man by his skill and labour produces a kind of secondary environment, which is a function of techniques as well as of resources. This ecological framework, product of man's skill and his environment, varies widely from one people and region to the next, according to the different materials at hand and the individual bent of their interests and skills" (1960 : 331). While discussing about ethnic segmentation and economic interdependence, Barth stated that "Thus the 'environment' of any one ethnic group is not only defined by natural conditions, but also by the presence and activities of the other ethnic groups on which it depends" (1968 : 324). Keeping the above views let me describe the occupational structure of the Yerukula of two villages with reference to different environments.

As stated earlier, the primary occupation of the Bidari Yerukula is collection of minor forest produce and selling it in the nearby villages. In olden days these Bidari Yerukula moved from place to place with their commodities carried on the back of asses and bullocks which they possessed in a large number. After settling down, at present many of the Bidari Yeru-

kula in the studied areas, besides their traditional occupation have adapted some other occupations due to impact of surrounding environment. The Table 6 gives an idea about the household wise distributions of occupational activities of the Bidari Yerukula and Uri Yerukula in Epilapalli and Ananthasagaram villages.

Table 6 : Distribution of occupational activity of the Yerukula households of Epilapalli and Ananthasagaram villages.

Sl. No.	Activity	EPILAPALLI		ANANTHASAGARAM	
		No. of households	%	No. of households	%
1.	Karepaku (Murraya Koenigii selling)	13	23.63	-	-
2.	Household industry— broom-sticks, ropes, twines and slings	9	16.36	-	-
3.	Household industry—Mats and bags	-	-	3	12.00
4.	Agriculture	6	10.90	5	20.00
5.	Agriculture + household industry	10	18.18	6	24.00
6.	Firewood and forest fruits selling	6	10.90	-	-
7.	Sheep and goat selling	3	5.47	-	-
8.	Sheep, goat selling + Agriculture	3	5.47	-	-
9.	Milk selling + Agriculture	-	-	8	32.00
10.	Bonded labour	-	-	1	4.00
11.	Carpentry	-	-	1	4.00
12.	Thievery	5	9.09	1	4.00
	Total	55	100.00	25	100.00

In Epilapalli village 13 households of the Yerukula are completely depending upon their traditional trade of 'Karepaku leaves'. *Karepaku chettu* (*Murraya Koenigii* tree) is a small tree available in large extent in the Palakonda and Durgam hills. The dry as well as fresh leaves of the tree are useful to flavour curries. Two or three Yerukula families as a group go to forest along with their asses, gunny bags to pick up the leaves of Karepaku. They spend about 10 to 15 days in the forest and each family will collect as much as 20 to 30 bags of it. After returning to Epilapalli village, they get it dried on the wide surfaced rocks. Later on husband and wife along with their small kids carry the dried Karepaku which is packed in gunny bags on the back of asses to sell in the multicaste villages and towns belonging to neighbouring districts. They traverse the distance on foot along with their asses. They prefer to collect the price in grain than in cash whenever they sell the leaf. They do not want to spend the earnings on food during the period of selling and instead, the female folk go from house to house, to beg food. It takes about 20 days of sojourn to dispose of the commodity which they possess. The amount of grain and cash which they collect is sufficient enough for their family until they go out for another trip after a period of two months. This occupational activity of *Karepaku* selling is completely absent in Ananthasagaram village, because of nonavailability of Kerepaku trees. They do not possess asses as they do not require.

Besides trade, the Yerukula are experts in making mats, ropes, broomsticks, twines, slings, bags etc. This household industry is also dependent on the availability of the raw materials in their surrounding environment. In Epilapalli village the Yerukula household industry produces only broomsticks, ropes, twines and slings whereas in Ananthasagaram village the Yerukula produce only mats and bags of date palm. In Epilapalli, the Yerukula, for their household industry, depend upon the shrubs of *Bambusa arundinacea* (*mullu veduru*), *Cochlosperumum gossypium* (*Konda gogu*), *Combretum oralifolium* (*Yedatheegu*), *Desmodium pulchellum* (*Paredu*), *Iachnocarpus frutescens* (*nalla teega*), *Pergularia daemia* (*dussaru teega*) etc., which grow in a large extent in Palakonda hills. The Yerukula after collecting them prepare various types of broom sticks, ropes, twines and slings and sell those things in Pulivendla weekly market. In Pulivendla, the weekly market held on Thursday, is claimed to be one of the most important in the Cuddapah district. The Yerukula generally go by walk to weekly market which is at a distance of 16 kms through forest track. Again they use the

ass as a mode of transport. In Ananthasagaram village, the Yerukula prepare only mats and bags in their household industry because the date palm grow to a large extent in the surrounding area. Only the male Yerukula carry the mats and bags to nearby towns of Anantapur and Dharmavaram by bullock carts and sell them for cash. Here their movement is quite frequent because the transport facilities are good. The soil of the Epilapalli and its surrounding area is predominantly of the clay type whereas the soil of Ananthasagaram is predominantly of the black type. Epilapalli with an average rainfall of 26.99 inches is considered to be the lowest net irrigated area on the average and cannot boast of any important irrigation sources. The Yerukula of this region are completely depending upon rain for their agriculture. But, in Ananthasagaram, due to the flow of river channel which is at a distance of 15 kms the underground water could provide sufficient water in the wells of this area to irrigate the lands. The householdwise land possession of the Yerukula in both the villages are given in Table 7.

Table 7 : Householdwise land possession of the Yerukula in both the villages.

Sl. No.	Land possession (in acres)	EPILAPALLI		ANANTHASAGARAM	
		No. of Households	%	No. of Households	%
1	Land less	36	56.45	6	24.00
2	0.1 - 2.0	3	5.45	4	16.00
3	2.1 - 4.0	10	18.18	3	12.00
4	4.1 - 6.0	4	7.28	5	20.00
5	6.1 - 8.0	-	-	4	16.00
6	8.1 - 10.00	2	3.64	3	12.00
TOTAL		55	100.00	25	100.00

Table 7 shows that in Epilapalli, 36 out of 55 households are landless. Only two Yerukula are having more than 8 acres of land. Whereas in Ananthasagaram 6 out of 25 households are landless and seven households are having between 6.1 to 10.0 acres.

Agricultural activity in Epilapalli village

In Epilapalli only 6 households (10.90%) are doing agriculture

and other ten households are doing it as subsidiary occupation along with their household industry. The crops grown in this village are *Jonna* (Jowar), *Sajja* (Bajra), *Korralu* (Korra), various pulses of *Ulava* (Horsegram), *Kandi* (red gram), *Pesara* (green gram) *Senaga* (Bengal gram) and *Verusenaga* (groundnut). *Jonna* is a staple food for them. Two distinct seasons are commonly adopted for sowing *jonna*—the Kharif, commencing from May-June and extending to September-October and the Rabi from September-October to February-March. The traditional varieties of *Jonna* grown by them are *Pacha Jonnalu* (Crop strain number : N 12) and *Mungaru Jonnalu* (N 10). The *Bajra* is also important millet for them. Pulses of red gram, Horse gram, Bengal gram are grown according to seasons. The groundnut crop is widely grown by the Yerukula. One Yerukula is growing paddy crop through the spring channel which is an interesting feature of the irrigation pattern of the Kadiri taluk. In Epilapalli a small spring risen from a hill-stream is useful to irrigate paddy in three acres of land. After storing the required grain and pulses for domestic consumption, they sell the remaining pulses at Pulivendla market.

The manurial pattern prevailing in Epilapalli is of organic type. Conventional source of the organic manure is the *dibbagunta*, generally dug in the back yard into which refuse of cattle, sheep and goat, house sweepings and leafy waste are thrown.

Agricultural activity in Ananthasagaram

Table 10 shows that 19 households (76%) are depending upon agriculture though they are doing other occupations like household industry and milk selling. For irrigation purposes, eight of the cultivators have electric motor pumps fitted in their wells. With the popularisation of "well-subsidy" scheme by Government, the digging of the wells in this area is steadily going up in recent years. The more important of the crops grown in this village are paddy, ragi, Jowar, pulses, groundnut, vegetables, onions, chillies, gingelly, castor etc. Paddy is raised mostly through well irrigation. Its nurseries are grown on separate beds for which sowings commence from June-July and its sprouts are transplanted during July-August. Paddy is harvested with sickles, bundled and carried to the thrashing floor. The varieties most popular in this area are *Saunavadlu* (c020), *Channaugi*, *Kesari* etc. All types of pulses are grown along with vegetables. Improved varieties of chillies, G. 1 and G. 2 which are released by the Research Station at Lam (Guntur, Andhra Pradesh) is grown widely in this village. Onion, crop of considerable commercial importance, is grown widely by the cultivators of this area. The groundnut is one of the major crops of this area and is widely grown by the Yerukula

cultivators of this village. The principal strains of this crop are *guttikaya* (TMV 2) and *Theega kaya* (TMV 3). These crops are normally rotated so that the natural soil content is conserved. They use modern fertilizers like Ammonium sulphate, super phosphate, Ammonium nitrate and Urea etc., for high yields.

Selling of firewood and forest produce like fruits are one of the important occupational activity in Epilapalli village. Six households of the Yerukula are completely depending upon this activity. They collect firewood from the trees of *Buchanania latifolia* (sara), *Diosphros chloroxylon* (Ullinda), *Erythroxylon monogynum* (Devadaru), *Vitex altissima* (nemali-adugu), *Zizyphus Oenoplia* (Pariki) etc. They collect dry fruits from the trees of *Acacia Concinna* (*See kayi*), *Caesalpinia bonducella* (gatchakayi), *Feronia elephantum* (Velaga), *Sapindus emarginatus* (Kumkudu), *Terminalia chebula* (Kerakkai) etc. They sell the fire wood and the dry fruits regularly in Pulivendla town. Ass is a good transport of firewood for them. In Ananthasagaram village this activity is completely absent because the firewood which they extract from the shrubs is not even sufficient for their own consumption. They often purchase firewood from outside.

Live stock : Live stock is a major asset to this community. They possess bullocks, cows, buffaloes, goats, sheep, fowls, pigs, donkeys and dogs. They are referred as experts in rearing the animals like cows, goats, sheep and pigs. The details of the live stock held by the Yerukula of the two villages are given in Table 8.

Table 8 : Live stock of Yerukulas in studied villages

Sl. No. Animals	EPILAPALLI		ANANTHASAGARAM	
	Total No.	%	Total No.	%
1 Bullocks	28	3.18	24	11.54
2 Cows	38	4.31	28	13.46
3 Buffaloes	-	-	15	7.21
4 Goats	217	24.63	84	40.38
5 Sheep	384	43.59	20	9.62
6 Fowls	5	0.45	31	14.90
7 Pigs	103	11.69	-	-
8 Donkeys	82	9.31	-	-
9 Dogs	25	2.84	6	2.89

In Epilapalli, the Yerukula are good traders of sheep, goat and pigs whereas in Ananthasagaram they are the experts in selling bovines (bullocks and buffaloes). In Epilapalli the Yerukula are having large number of sheep and goats than cows and bullocks. The rearing of ovines (sheep and goat) is practically monopolised by the Yerukula in Epilapalli region. During the day time the herds are allowed to roam about from place to place in the forest for grazing, but during the nights they are securely penned in an enclosure just adjacent to their houses. Three households of the Yerukula are completely depending upon the trade of sheep and goat and other three households are indirectly dependent upon them. They sell the animals at Pulivendla weekly market, which is claimed to be one of the best cattle markets in the Cuddapah district. Pigs are largely reared in Epilapalli. They sell pig manure, which is of great demand for garden cultivation. In Ananthasagaram the Yerukula do trade in calves and bullocks to a larger extent. They rear the cows and sell the male calves to nearby agriculturists of other castes. A few Yerukula have contracts with some ryots for supplying male calves. Its poor soil and sparse vegetation and its susceptibility to seasonal uncertainties are the main reasons contributing to the scarcity of grazing facilities and fodder. Paddy and ragi hay constitute the chief fodder in this area. Groundnut haulms and horsegram bhoosas are also used as fodder for animals.

Dairying which is a necessary concomitant of live stock economy is undertaken in a fairly substantial scale in Ananthasagram village. Along with other castes, most of the Yerukula own a cow or buffalo to provide milk and milk products for sale. Many Yerukulas of this village supply milk to the hotels of Anantapur and Dharmavaram towns. Whereas in Epilapalli village, the Yerukula think that selling the milk of the cow or the goat is considered sin. They consume less amount of milk.

Due to the interaction with the Hindu peasantry in Ananthasagaram, one household of the Yerukula have become bonded labourers to earn their livelihood. Under this system, a written contract is made between the employer and the labourer, that the latter will serve the former for one year or for an indefinite period. The *Jeetagadu* or labourer of this type works in the field and also does other work given by the Reddy or master from morning till night. In return, he is provided food two times a day and clothes twice a year. This system is completely absent in Epilapalli village because due to the absence of other castes within the settlement and the existence of the mode of independent economic activity.

In Ananthasagaram village one household of the Yerukula have adapted the occupation of carpentry due to the close interaction with carpenter caste. This Yerukula family is helping in the preparation of the agricultural implements to other Yerukula cultivators. In Epilapalli the Yerukula are depending on a carpenter of neighbouring village for agricultural implements.

Though the Yerukula engage themselves in several occupations they are frequently suspected of committing thefts. In Epilapalli 5 households and in Ananthasagaram one household are depending on thievery to a larger extent. Their female folk help male persons by giving clues about those houses where they have a possibility to commit thefts. In Epilapalli, they concentrate on sheep, goat and other cattle whereas in Ananthasagaram they go for valuable ornaments and utensils. When the male persons are caught and kept in jail, their womenfolk spend their time in doing some labour work until their menfolk returned from the jail.

Thus the Yerukula in both the villages practise different types of occupations at the same time, in order to sustain themselves and live on marginal economy.

Standard of living

Having given a detailed idea of the economic activities of the Yerukula, the income sources to which the population belong, the pattern of the agricultural activity and the different occupations in which they engage themselves, it is necessary to give some idea of their standard of living.

Epilapalli is like other interior tribal village in India. The general impression one gets after looking at the village is that the people are poor. According to the Yerukula, this village is completely neglected by those who are supposed to be concerned with the welfare of the villagers.

In Epilapalli, the staple diet of Yerukula is *jonna* and *korra*. It is usually cooked into *jonna mudda* and *korra annam* and is mostly consumed with some watery curry *Chintagojju* which is made with high dosage of chillies, tamarind and salt. Generally they prepare Chutney called *Urimindi* from gogaku leaf or from groundnut seeds. Rice is seldom cooked. Vegetables and certain tubers are freely used. The significant feature of the Yerukula of Epilapalli is the consumption of meat. They are good meat eaters. The Yerukula relish all types of meat such as that of goat, sheep, fowl, fish, pig, wild boar, porcupine etc. Among the other small ani-

imals whose flesh they relish are, hare, rabbit, cat, field rat and birds like *Yella ravakalu*, *Keru jeevulu*, *Kumujulu*, *Pala Kalu*, *Yelisi guvvalu*, *Nemali* (Peacock) etc. Generally they hunt the animals and rear the sheep and goat for selling as well as for eating.

In order to get some idea of daily expenditure I took a survey of 8 households of the village Epilapalli and noted down their daily expenditure for a period of seven days (*see Appendix C*). Such households were selected which approximately represented the different income categories of the village. From the data so collected, average daily expenditure for each household was calculated. Table 9 shows the results of the survey in Epilapalli.

Table 9 : Daily average expenditure per household in Epilapalli

Sl. No.	Total No. of individuals	Earners with their occupation	Total Expenditure
1	9	Agriculture + Household Industry + Pig selling	14-90
2	8	Household industry	6-70
3	5	Firewood and forest fruits selling	3-07
4	8	Karepaku seller	9-40
5	9	Firewood seller	3-80
6	5	Karepaku seller	4-20
7	6	Sheep, goat seller + Agriculture	7-75
8	9	Household industry	8-50
Total	59		53-32

The Table 9 shows variations of expenditure in different households from Rs. 3.07 to Rs. 14.90 per day. On the basis of this data, the per capita expenditure per day works out to Re. 0.90, which will be approximately Rs. 328.50 per year.

Ananthasagaram is like any other multi-caste village. The general impression one gets by looking this village is of wide spread development in all aspects. But still the Yerukula in this village, appears disorganised and bypassed by the other dominant castes and also by those who are supposed to be concerned with the welfare of these communities. In Ananthasagaram, the staple food of the Yerukula is ragi. It is usually cooked into *sangati* and is mostly consumed with chutney (prepared with tomato, onion

with more green chillies). Rice is also consumed occasionally. Vegetables are freely used. On Sundays only, all Yerukula houses cook mutton as the same is sold on that day in the village. They consume limited mutton, because they have to buy it.

In order to get some idea of daily expenditure, apart from general impression, I took a survey of 8 households of the Yerukula of Ananthasagaram village as I have done for the Epilapalli village and calculated the daily expenditure for each household. Table 10 shows the result of the survey in Ananthasagaram.

Table 10 : Daily average expenditure per household in Ananthasagaram

Sl. No.	Total No. of individuals	Earners with their occupation	Total Expenditure
1	8	Agriculture + Milk selling	11-45
2	7	Household Industry	10-55
3	19	Household Industry + Milk selling	31-33
4	4	Agriculture laboures	2-35
5	5	Carpenter	5-90
6	7	Milk selling + Agriculture	9-40
7	10	Agriculture + Thievery	10-45
8	6	Bonded labourer	3-35
Total			85-00

Table 10 shows variations of expenditure in different households from Rs. 2.35 to 31.55 per day. On the basis of this data, the per capita expenditure per day works out to be Rs. 1.30, which will be approximately Rs. 474.50 per year. Comparing this data with Epilapalli, the estimates in Ananthasagaram are slightly higher. It indicates that the Yerukula of Ananthasagaram are having more capacity for adaptability and ingenuity.

CUSTOMARY LAW : THE MARRIAGE

Anthropological understanding of law in its various manifestations has led to a new line of thinking. Apart from the works on law in pre-literate societies which were written by colonial administrators, missionaries etc., there were a few scholars Maine 1861, Barton 1919, Malinowski 1926, Hogbin 1934, Schapera 1938 who studied law from anthropological perspective and gave a brief clue in understanding the importance of the law in primitive societies. Studies on primitive law was developed from the collection of normative rules ('laws') and the observation of the application of such rules in different situations.

Generally, all primitive societies have means by which the behaviour of their members can be channelized effectively. This chapter attempts to examine the customary law of the Yerukula with reference to the institution of marriage. Before proceeding to the description of the above institution, let me present briefly about the political organization of the Yerukula.

The society of the Yerukula is generally compact. Its cohesion and solidarity are chiefly maintained by the unwritten law—which is systematic and integrated. The dominant feature of the Yerukula political organization is its *Kula panchayat*. In both Epilapalli and Ananthasagaram villages they have their own Kula panchayat. The members of the Kula panchayat are usually elders who are called *Peddamonushulu* and the head of the Yerukula settlement is called the *Berumonusha* meaning 'big man'. The Berumonusha should be between 35 and 55 years of age and when he crosses the age of 55 he ceases to be the Berumonusha though he may continue to command some influence on the Kula panchayat. The *Berumonusha* presides over all proceedings and is given an honourable position at all social functions. Cases of the following nature are taken up for arbitration in the Kula panrhayat—disputes relating to sex, disputes regarding property and loans, disputes regarding land and quarrels between the individuals or families. Usually they do not like their disputes to be discussed and decided by other castes and hence they try to settle all their disputes among themselves.

The Kula panchayat may decide the dispute in one sitting or adjourn for several sittings. When the real facts are not available to identify the guilty person in spite of several adjournments in a particular case, then they try to identify the guilty through ordeals, like both the parties dipping their fingers in the boiling oil or lifting a red-hot crowbar, carrying the water filled-pot on palms without dropping a drop of water and walking through fire-bed, in the presence of the Berumonusha and the elders gathered for the purpose. The Yerukula believe that the ordeals would decide the righteousness or otherwise of a person in a dispute. The alleged culprit is expected to go through the ordeals without any pain or discomfort if he is innocent. The Yerukula believe that behind these ordeals is the divine power which will protect the innocent and punish the guilty. It is important to note that before the ordeal takes place the Kula panchayat makes all efforts to arrive at the truth on the basis of available evidences. Apart from solving disputes regarding theft and petty matters, the Kula panchayat is also responsible for the maintenance of social order in the community as per the norms of their society. If a man fails to fulfil the norms of the society he is suitably reprimanded and if the violation is serious he may be ex-communicated from the community by the Kula panchayat. Inter-dining or even serving water to the ex-communicated is disallowed and considered to be polluting, till the person is readmitted only after he admits his guilt and has taken oath in front of *Berumonusha* that in future he will not indulge in any such activities. For re-admission the ex-communicated man must undergo purificatory ceremonies.

Epilapalli and Ananthasagaram villages, as mentioned earlier are included in a statutory village panchayat. Therefore, they are part of the wider social, political, economic and legal system. The statutory panchayat does not give any separate recognition to the customary law of the Yerukula which means that if any law of the state is violated by the Yerukula, though sanctioned by the community, the state law will prevail. Legally this restricts the activities of the Kula panchayat to residual matters. Here it is necessary to state that the officials who are concerned for village administration are a potential source of conflict and challenge to the Yerukula customary legal system. But this activity also depends upon the physical existence of the territory of the Yerukula. The Epilapalli village is far away from the Odulapalli, where the statutory panchayat is centred. Generally no official is eager to go to Epilapalli. In this way the Yerukula are free to act according to their customary law. Here even now the Kula panchayat

allows ordeals to be conducted to detect and punish the guilty, but in Ananthasagaram village, where Yerukulas live closely with other castes, this practice has been given up. The other castes and the village Muncif of Ananthasagaram is against the practice of ordeals. They even report to the police whenever they suspect any ordeal was going to be practised by the Yerakula. Thus, in Anantasagaram, due to the interference of the village elders of dominant castes, the Yerukula are following the two types of political divisions, one is of their *Berumonusha* and the other of the other caste elders. At present the Yerukula of Anantasagaram village need not have to face the ordeals because of the interference of the police, through the local caste village elders.

The marriage

Marriage is an institutionalized mating arrangement between man and woman and thereby works as a precondition of universal family organization of human beings. According to Yerukula, life is meaningless without marriage and it is the parent's moral duty to arrange marriage for their sons and daughters. Before discussing the details about the types of marriage, bride price, marriage ceremony, remarriage, divorce etc., let me analyse the rules and restrictions of marriage with reference to clan organization.

Clan organization

As mentioned earlier, the Yerukula are divided into three large endogamous groups on the basis of their traditional occupation. They are : Bidari Yerukula, Dabba Yerukula and Kunche Yerukula. Their clans and lineages are exogamous. The rules of exogamy extend further than this and include persons who are closely related by marriage ; persons related by blood ; and finally, persons standing in a particular social relationship to each other. Here it is essential to note about the Yerukula gotra (clan) and *intiperu* (Family name) to understand the rules and restrictions of their marriage.

Gotra (clan) : The Bidari Yerukula are divided into three exogamous divisions, *i.e.*, 'gotramulu' (plural for gotra) which are unilateral groups of relatives, multilocal in settlement, the members of which are determined by unilateral descent. The Table 11 shows the exogamous divisions or clans of the Yerukula.

Table 11 : Clans of the Yerukula

Sl. No.	Name of the clan in Yerkali dialect	Equivalent term in Telugu language (according to Yerukulas)
1.	Kavadi	Gujjula
2.	Sathpadi	Sake
3.	Mendragutti or Menapadi	Nelabotula

The above mentioned exogamous divisions clearly show that the Yerukula obtained their gotra names from the particular religious services offered to their beloved god. It is said that the people who belong to *Kavadi* are so called because they carry their offerings in *Kavadi* to Lord Venkateswara at Tirupati, a town in Andhra Pradesh. *Kavadi* is a carrying device in which at each ends of a pole, a basket is suspended. According to informants the people who belong to *Sathpadi* clan are so called because they adorn their god with flowers and jewels in Tamil style called *Satpadi*, which is equivalent to *samarpane* in Sanskrit language. The people who belong to *Mendragutti* or *Menapadi* clan sing songs before god, stitch shoes to the idol and drag the temple cart on specific ceremonial occasions. According to Thurston "The members of the first two divisions are pure Koravas who have never married outside the caste, whereas the third division represents and includes the mixed marriages and the offspring thereof" (1909 : 449). Thus it is understood that the *Kavadi* and *Sathapadi* clans of Yerukula community consider the people who belong to *Mendragutti* or *Menapadi* as lower in social hierarchy.

Intiperu (Family name) : The family name is known as *intiperu* or literally the house-name. The *intiperu* is a characteristic of the Bidari Yerukula. Every family has an *intiperu*. When two Yerukula of different villages meet, they enquire about each other's *intiperu*. A Yerukula's actions whether good or bad are reflected back on his *intiperu*, since a man is known by his *intiperu*. The *intiperu* is attached as a prefix to one's personal name and a person's identity is often referred to by his family name. Since the Yerukula society is patrilineal, the *intiperu* of a boy remains the same throughout his life, but a girl changes her family name when she marries and it becomes that of her husband's family name.

These family names are sometimes names of villages, trees and some-

times they do not even convey any sense but every family must have a name. Hsu (1963) related the *intiperu* unit with 'gotra' and writes about it, "the actual names of these units have meanings which vary from those of plants and animals to those of inanimate things and artifacts" (Suryanarayana, 1977 : 92). Therefore, we may categorize the *intiperu* of Yerukula as under :

- 1 Named after some distinguished ancestors.
- 2 Named after the acts of the ancestors.
- 3 Named after the place where the family once lived before emigrating to their present abode.
- 4 Named after the object(s) with which the ancestors have been in close association like, animal, plants and plant products and artifacts and other such things.

The informants belonging to an *intiperu*, however, cannot trace a common ancestry.

A Yerukula woman belongs to her affinal kins pollution group and her death pollutes her affines whose *intiperu* she bears and to the same degree. The Bidari Yerukula of Epilapalli are having *intiperu* but the Uri Yerukula of Ananthasagaram do not follow the system of *intiperu* but their marriage regulating factor is only the clan (gotra). They belong to only Gujjula and Sake clans.

Table 12 : Details of the intiperlu under each gotra among the Bidari Yerukula of Epilapalli (on the basis of genealogical information)

Sl. No.	Gotra name	The names of intiperu under the corresponding gotra
1.	Kavadi	1) Kampa 2) Kedri 3) Lokineni 4) Munga 5) Pannars 6) Poojari 7) Rageeri 8) Vallage
2.	Sathpadi	1) Etta 2) Gopu 3) Kommeri 4) Koneru 5) Manka 6) Mota 7) Parsenu 8) Poloilla 9) Pola 10) Ragula 11) Sampathi
3.	Mendragutti or Menapadi	1) Devarakonda 2) Gajjela 3) Katari 4) Surusuru 5) Uligitti 6) Vollabayi

Gotramu and intiperu

It should also be emphasized here that gotra is the only regulating

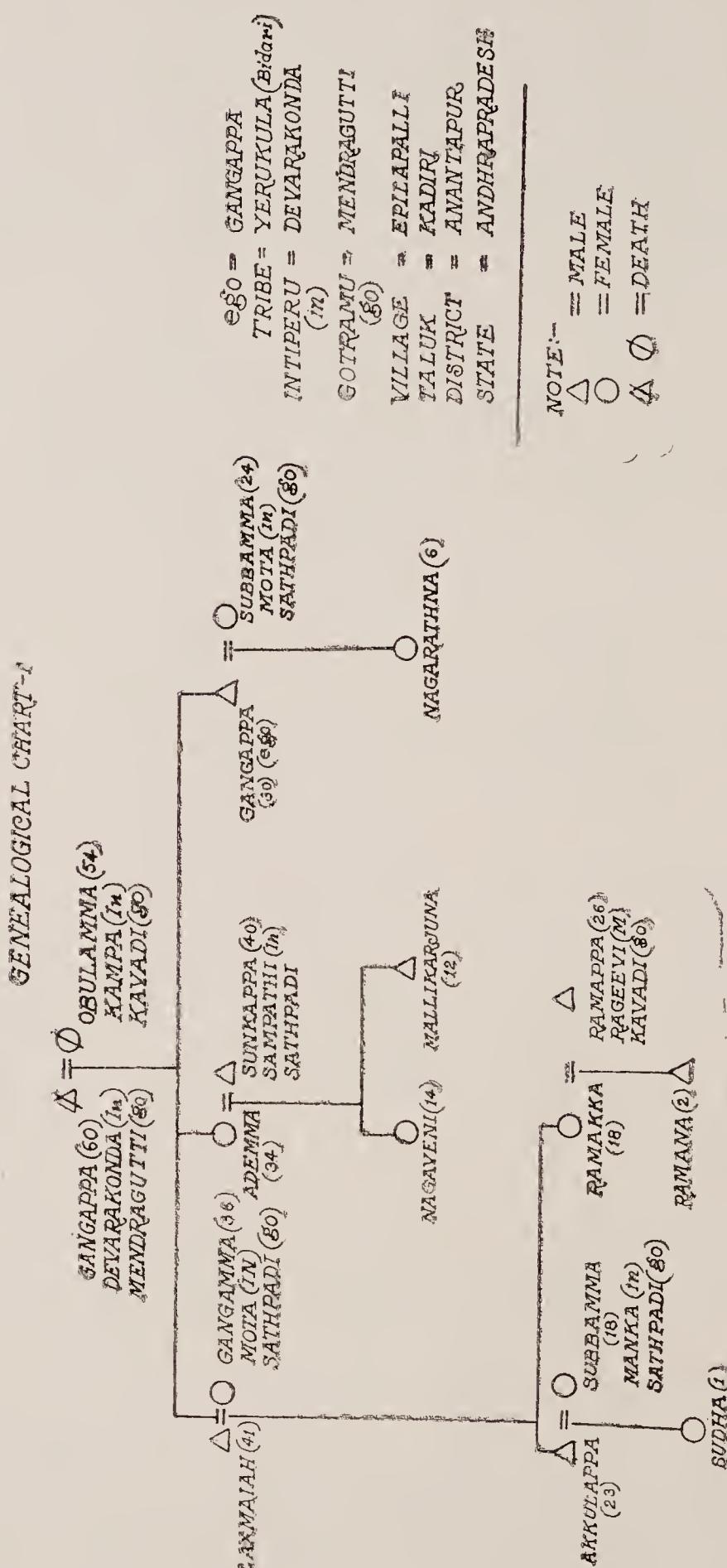
factor in the choice of a mate. Each gotra consists of a number of *intiperu*. A person who belongs to one *intiperu* of a gotra cannot make alliance with the other *intiperu* of the same gotra. He is allowed to marry a girl of another *intiperu* of another gotra. There are so many *intiperu* under each gotra as shown in the Table 12.

The genealogical *Chart No. 1* shows that how the gotra regulates the marital relations in the Bidari Yerukula of Epilapalli village. Likewise the genealogical *Chart No. 2* shows how the two gotras, Gujjula and Sake regulates marital relationship among the Uri Yerukula of Ananthasagaram village.

Any sexual intercourse between the members of the same gotra is tabooed. Further, a Yerukula should not have any alliance with women of lower castes like Chakali (Washerman), Mangali (Barber), Mala and Madiga (Scheduled castes).

Types of marriage

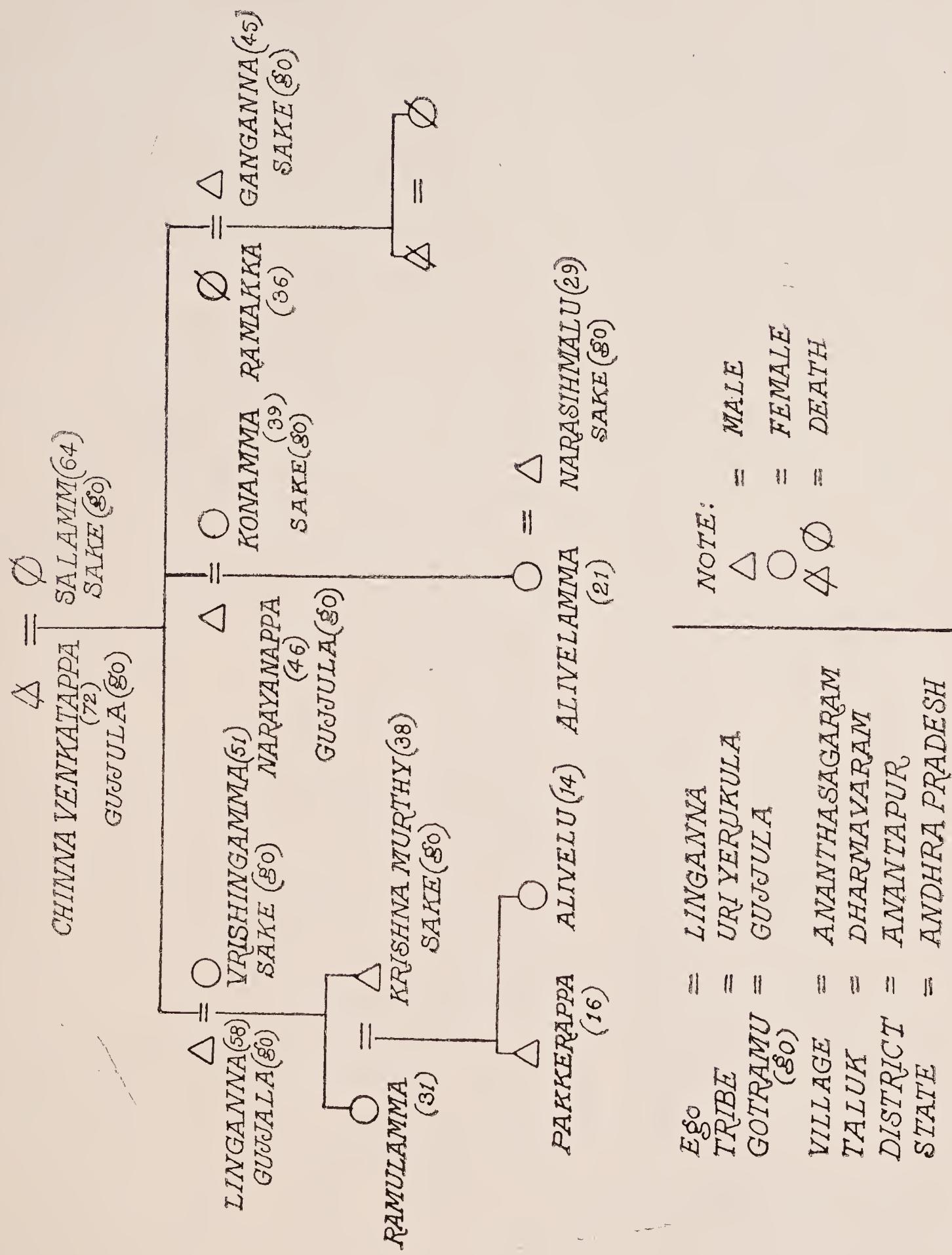
The pattern of marriages in the tribal society is regular in nature. This gives rise to a number of marriage types. Regarding the types of marriages, Dube has given a three fold classification (1969 : 119) which includes (i) ideal or general marriage, (ii) Non-ideal but socially approved marriage and (iii) Disrespectful marriage. The ideal marriage is arranged by parents followed by a regular marriage ceremony. The non-ideal marriage finds the intermediary social prestige and is effected through many ways like elopement, capture etc. The third category finds itself at the lowest rung of the social ladder and is effected through force, intrusion, etc. In Yerukula community the first two types, i.e., ideal or general marriage and non-ideal marriage type is common. Generally it appears that ideal marriage is preferred particularly when one weds for the first time. The father of the boy takes initiative in finding a suitable bride for his boy. Due weight is given to the views of boys and girls in the selection of a partner. Among the Yerukula, monogamy, the pairing of one man to one woman is the most common and widely prevalent form of marriage. Polyandry is prohibited in the Yerukula community. In Epilapalli village there are four cases of polygyny and in Ananthasagaram one. Generally the practice of polygyny depends on the economic condition and social status of the man concerned. In this case generally all the wives live in a common house with their husband. In Yerukula community, marriage with an elder sister's daughter is allowed and



preferred. They prefer to choose their mates from among their cross cousins. Junior sororate system is existing among them.

Bride-price

Giving bride-price is known as *Sulla Ponnu*, in *Yerkali basha*, which is a common custom in their marriage ceremony. After fixing the date of ma-



In marriage, the father of the bridegroom pays a fixed amount of Rs. 48/- as bride price to the father of the bride. This amount is always paid in cash. Generally, the recipient of bride price is bride's mother's brother. It is binding among them that in the marriages of the first two daughters of a woman, the bride-price must be given to her brother.

In case the parents of the groom are very poor, at least half of the fixed

bride-price must be paid before the ceremony, to enable the girl's father to pay off her maternal uncle's share and to make wedding preparations. The balance may be cleared after marriage either in lumpsum or by instalments. There is no necessity for the maternal uncle to refund the bride-price, in case the bride was to divorce or die, later. In case a woman who after deserting her husband, lives with another man as his wife, the second husband has to give the amount of *Sulla*, i.e., Rs. 24/- along with the marriage expenditure to her first husband as *maganali*, i.e., compensation.

Bride-price system is very strictly followed by the Yerukula of Epilapalli village. But in Ananthasagaram village due to the presence of the other dominant caste groups, and the dependence of the Yerukula on cash economy, the Yerukula adapted the system of dowry, by which the father of the bride has to pay some amount to the father of the bridegroom as dowry before starting marriage ceremony.

Marriage ceremony

Marriage ceremony is known as *Kannalam*, in Yerkali basha. The usual age of marriage for the girl is between 14 and 16 years while for the boy, the age is between 18 and 20 years. The father of the boy, with some of the elders of his community proceeds in quest of the suitable bride. A selection having been made, and the proposal having been accepted by the girl's parents, a day is fixed for the performance of the *agu madu* (betrothal) ceremony. On the day fixed for it, the parents of the boy, with their relatives, set out for the girl's house, taking with them a new mat of date palm. On their arrival, they spread the mat in the open, in front of the house, and on this mat the bride's father, *Berumonusha*, and the kula panchayat members seated. Then they decide the bride-price. Liquor is ordered at the expenses of the bridegroom's father and consumed by all the elders. Then they think about the marriage date. It is said in Epilapalli village that the Yerukula do not invite Brahmin to officiate but consult him for fixing up the auspicious day for the celebration of marriage. Marriage is generally considered as a contract by the Yerukula. The tribal marriage is generally regarded as a civil contract and not a religious sacrament and, therefore, religious solemnization does not take place (Majumdar and Madan 1956 : 86). It is true in the case of the Yerukula of Epilapalli. But among the Yerukula of Ananthasagaram, however due to the influence of the Hindus the Yerukula take this religious solemnization as having a prestige value and as such their traditional marriage ceremony is blended with the Hindu rituals.

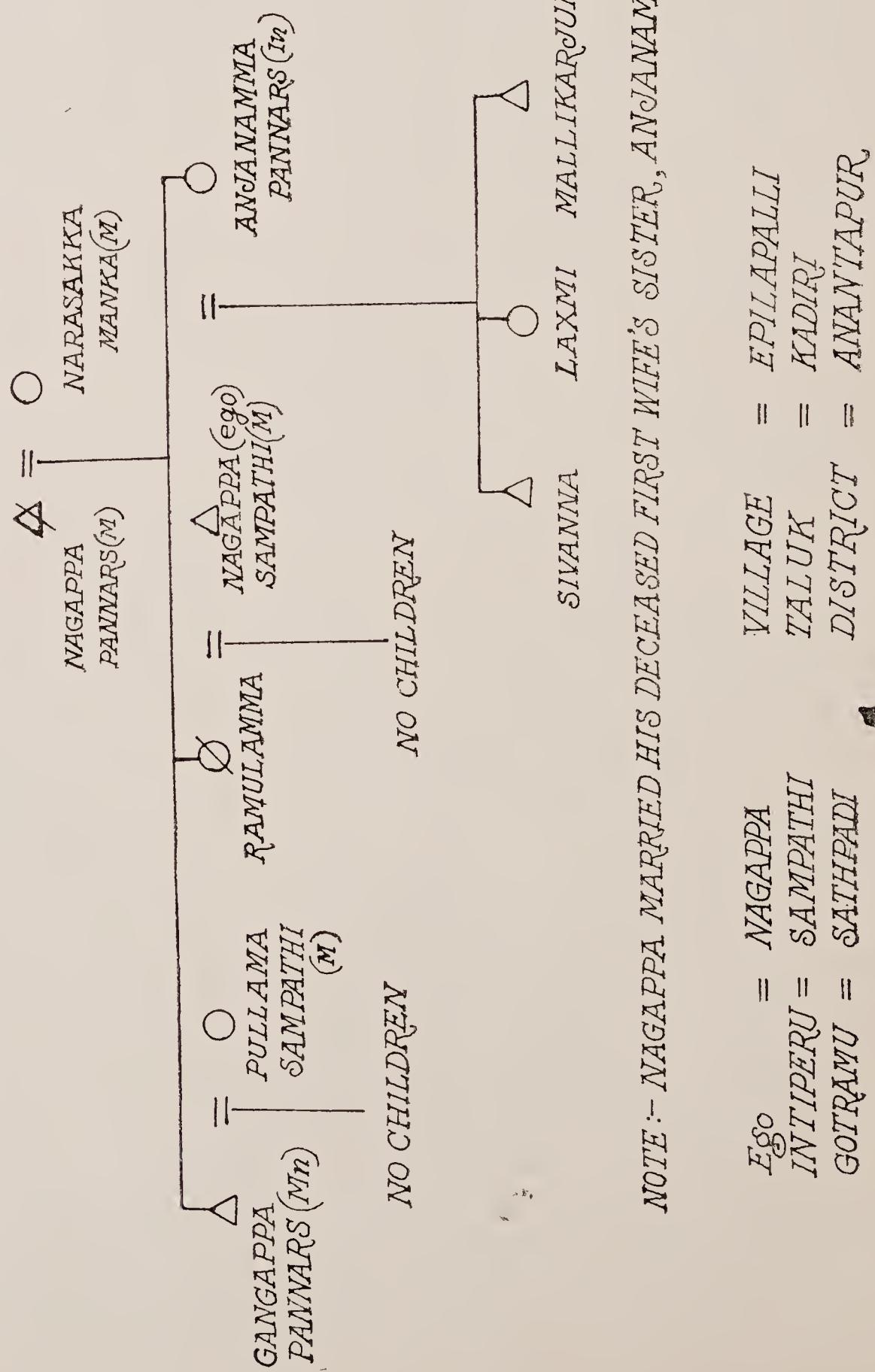
According to the information given by the Yerukula of Epilapalli, marriage is celebrated usually for 3 days near the bride's house. First day is known as *Gaju metti* (bangle and toe ring). The bride and groom are prepared for marriage. The ceremony connected with the preparation of bride is known as wearing of bangles and of bridegroom as wearing toe ring. *Kankanams* are tied to the wrists (right wrist for groom and left wrist to bride) of couple. Second day ceremony is known as *Toorpu vakili* (east door). On the second day they construct two temporary huts in front of bride's house in which its doors are facing towards east direction. Left hut is allotted for bride and the right hut is for bridegroom. In bride's hut they kept lighted oil lamp, one new bamboo basket and a sling. In bridegroom's hut they keep *Kalasam* (metallic vessel with coconut on top of it). The couple are given oil bath and dressed in new clothes. They are taken to the marriage huts, amidst the invitees and spend the day inside the huts.

Third day ceremony is known as *Talabalu*. On third day morning the betrothed pair, in front of their allotted huts, are smeared five times with a paste of turmeric and oil are then bathed. Then the parents of the bride, the father carrying on his head a new earthen pot and the mother holding in her hand lighted lamps, proceed in procession to the village well. A twig of the pipal tree (*Ficus religiosa*) with five off-shoots is searched for and is worshipped and placed in the earthen pot. The pot is then filled with water and carried back to the marriage huts, where it is kept covered, by the bride's mother, with a lighted oil lamp, which is not allowed to go out so long as the marriage lasts. Then the couple seated facing the sanctified pot, the bride to the left of her husband, on squares of Jola and ragi grain drawn on a date palm mat spread underneath the bower. At the auspicious hour fixed for the *tali* tying ceremony, the bridegroom ties the sacred, *tali* (a thread with black beads) around the neck of the bride. Then *Talabalu* ceremony follows, when the couple pour rice on each other's head. A feast, consisting of non-vegetarian dishes, is arranged for all those who attend the function and liquor is freely consumed. The marriage procession takes place in the night. Then the marriage huts are removed permanently. According to Yerukula customary law, they should not use musical instruments during the marriage days. The total expenditure on marriage ranges between Rs. 800/- and 1,000/-.

Remarriage : In Yerukula community, widow marriage is allowed and a woman can marry several times, provided at the time of every subsequent marriage, her previous husband should not be alive or she has been granted separation or divorce from her husband by the Kula panchayat. A Yerukula

kula who wishes to marry a widow, purchases new clothes for himself and a saree for her. The *Berumonusha* is invited along with other elders of the village for the marriage. On the day fixed for marriage, in presence of all the invitees in the evening, he presents her new saree in front of her house. This simple ceremony is known as *Seere Kattinchu*. On this occasion he has to pay Rs. 24/- as bride price to the former father-in-law of his would be wife. If the widow has only children they are left in the care of the

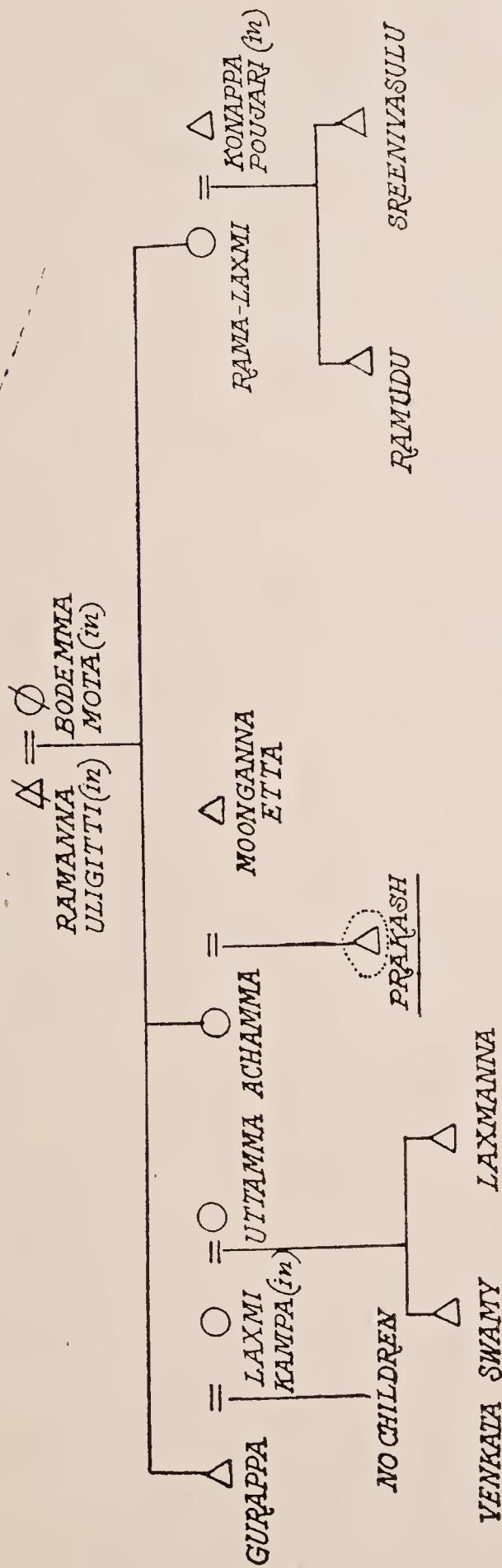
GENEALOGICAL CHART-3



relatives of former husband. If she has children below the age of 2 years, she takes them along with her, while coming to second husband's house. After 2 or 3 years she sends them back to her former husband's house or to his relatives.

They do not attach any social stigma to the children who are born out of remarriage. A widow gets the status of a married woman in the com-

GENEALOGICAL CHART - 4



NOTE: ① VILGITTI GURAPPA GIVEN DIVORCE TO LAXMI ON THE GROUND OF BARRENNESS. HE REMARRIED UTTAMMA AFTER CELEBRATING SEERE KATTUCHU CEREMONY.

② POOJARI KONAPPA RESIDING IN HIS FATHER-IN-LAW'S HOUSE

③ ETTA MOOGANNA ADOPTED PRAKASH BECAUSE OF HIS CHILDLESSNESS

Ego	=	GURAPPA
INTIPERU	=	ULIGITTI
GOTRAMU	=	MENDRAGUTTI
VILLAGE	=	EPILAPALLI
TALUK	=	KADIRI

munity after remarriage. She participates in all festivals, religious functions and other important occasions, which take place in her house and in the village, like any other woman.

Divorce : In Yerkali basha, divorce is known as *Rookha Perku Kodthutu*. The divorcees are allowed to marry again. But there could be dispute on the grounds for divorce. Marriage implies a stable relationship between the husband and his kinsmen on the one hand, and the wife and her kinsmen on the other. This relationship is maintained by a complex system of reciprocal obligations, duties and conventional pattern of behaviour. Between the married couple there are errors, breaches of good behaviour or recognised rights which the Yerukula will quote as the usual causes of divorce. An Yerukula man may demand divorce from his wife for the following reasons : barrenness, laziness, adultery, desertion (if a wife runs away to live with another man), incurable diseases. The grounds for divorce which will receive the support of a married woman's natal family are as follows : impotence or sterility of the husband, failure to support wife, cruel treatment.

Process of divorce : If a person wants to divorce his wife on some grounds, mentioned above, he should inform the matter to the Kula panchayat of the village. One day the *Berumonusha* invites other *peddamonushulu* and conducts the proceedings of the Kulapanchayat. Both parents of husband and wife are invited and in front of all, the husband has to give a pot of toddy with five sets of betel leaves and supari nuts along with a *rooka* (coin) of 25 paise to his wife. After the acceptance of this the *Berumonusha* declares that the husband and wife are formally separated from each other. There is no necessity of repayment of bride-price or any other compensation, if both desired for divorce. But if the divorce is on account of adultery or desertion by the wife, the divorced woman may marry her paramour, and the latter has to pay half of the amount of bride-price and the complete expenditure of marriage to the previous husband.

FAMILY AND KINSHIP

Family is an element in the social structure and forms the first sphere in which individuals combine. In sociological literature, the word 'family' is used in several different senses : "1. The household... 2. The body of persons who live in one house or under one head, including parents, children, servants, etc. 3. The group consisting of parents and their children, whether living together or not; in a wider sense, all those who are nearly connected by blood or affinity... 4. Those descended or claiming descent from a common ancestor; a house, kindred, lineage..." (The shorter Oxford English Dictionary, 3rd ed., 1959, Italics mine; see also Notes and Queries on Anthropology, 1957, p. 70). The four social units indicated by the four meanings are usually related to each other (Shah, 1973 : 3). Thus family is a social group characterized by common residence. "In all human societies, the workshop, so to speak, of social reproduction, is the domestic group. It is this group which must remain in operation over a stretch of time long enough to rear off-spring to the stage of physical and social reproductivity of a society is to maintain itself" (Fortes, 1962 : 2). This is the justification for the study of domestic group in any society. The type and composition of the domestic group can vary from society to society but nevertheless there cannot be any society without a domestic group.

The family is the fundamental multipurpose organization for many of the principal life functions of an individual and of society. Moreover, as Eric Wolf has written, "the family is the bearer of virtue and of public reputation; a man's reputation is linked with that of his family and with his own relations to his family. Invariably, they refer back to ways which people handle their domestic-affairs" (1966 : 8). Mandelbaum states "domestic patterns establish the nature of the relations between the sexes—and among the generations. They teach the fundamental lessons of who 'we' are and who 'they' are: how we may like with each others, whom we may marry and whom we must not marry. Such patterns instill motivation in the young so that in time, they will bring up their own young to seek similar cultural patterns" (1970 : 33-34).

The family among the Yerukula can be considered to be the smallest basic kin unit. Its membership is acquired through marriage, birth and adoption¹. The family in Epilapalli and Ananthasagaram is synonymous with the household¹, and comprises husband, wife, children and at times other members. I have for the sake of convenience, classified the various families on the basis of their composition into different types. The data on family (Table 13) shows that there are eight different types of families among the Yerukula in Epilapalli and Ananthasagaram. However, in Epilapalli village, the predominant type is the elementary family, consisting of husband, wife and unmarried children. Next are the extended families of various descriptions of which husband, wife, children and married sons and their wives which are the most common. Widowed mothers or fathers living along with their married sons is the other form of family found in both the villages. Besides these, the other forms of family are a husband living with his two wives in a common household; widowed mother living with her unmarried children; Husband and wife along with their divorced daughter; widow living along with her adopted son and his wife and children; Husband, wife, their children along with husband's wife's sister, the families are patrilineal and patrilocal. Thus the data shows a wide variety of composition of family in Epilapalli and Ananthasagaram as found elsewhere in the region as well as in other areas of the country.

Generally among the Yerukula a girl after her *Kannalam*, joins her husband's family. Male members enter into the family at birth and remain until separated by death or partition. Generally in Yerukula community, the elderly male member of the family is the locus of authority. In the case of his death, his wife, if she is elder to his brother, becomes the head of the household.

A family in Yerukula society is a corporate group whose members act together to meet their common purposes. They live in the same house, work together, earn their income, property and perform religious rituals as a family. Each Yerukula learns the basic things of his culture and society from his family; he shares his personal achievements with other family members and he assumes the reputation of his family in the village. A family is not only a reproductive unit but also a socializing agency. In both the villages studied, kinship begins with the family and extend beyond the family through consanguineal and affinal bonds.

1. To be more explicit, the household is one of the several dimensions of the family and should be viewed in relation to the other dimensions.

Table 13 : Composition of families in Epilapalli and Ananthasagaram

Sl. No.	Composition of families	Epilapalli		Ananthasagaram	
		Families	Indiv.duals	Families	Individuals
1.	Husband, wife and children	... 26	104 7	7	35
2.	Husband, wife with married son/sons and children	6	49 4	49 4	37
3.	Husband, wife, children and husband's widowed father/mother	12	79 5	79 5	47
4.	Husband with his two wives and children	4	28 2	28 2	25
5.	Widow and her unmarried children	3	8 4	8 4	18
6.	Husband, wife with divorced daughter	1	7 1	7 1	4
7.	Widow with her adopted son and his wife and children	1	4 -	4 -	-
8.	Husband, wife, children and wife's sister	2	12 2	12 2	10
TOTAL		55	291 25	291 25	176

A family custom is defined to be “the usages of a family transmitted successively (from father to son) according to law”. It generally relates to matters affecting the members of a family in their relationship to each other and to the family as a unit. Amongst the members of a family it has an obligatory force and distinguishes the family by its rules from other families. These rules chiefly concern adoption, marriage and mode of inheritance of property. As we have already discussed about marriage in the previous chapter, it is now necessary to understand the process of adoption and mode of inheritance among them.

Adoption: In the Yerukula dialect, adoption is known as *Dachu Aasukondu*. When a person has no children or without a male child, he may adopt a boy, preferably the son of his brother or one belonging to the same exogamous division. Yerukula also permit the adoption of the children of other tribes like Voddar, Banjara (Sugali) etc., but not from Muslim, Christian, service castes like Mangali (Barber), Chakali (washerman), Scheduled castes like Mala and Madiga. There is no ceremony observed for adoption of a child in this community except that of taking off the old *Molatadu* (waist-thread) of the boy and putting on a new one which is called *Molatadu Marchu*, and giving a dinner to the tribesmen to announce the fact. The duties of an adopted child are similar to that of a natural child and he is the successor of the property of his adoptive parents.

An essential part of adoption in Yerukula community is the publicity of the relationship and of the intentions of the adoptive parents. The original parents of an adopted child have generally no right to reclaim the child from its adoptive parents so long as the child desires to remain with them. But if the child consents to return to its own parents, it should be restored to them. In such cases the adoptive parents are entitled to recover from the original parents, compensation for the expenses they incurred in bringing up the child. But when the adoptive parents refuse to maintain their adopted child, they cannot claim from the original parents any expenses incurred by them in bringing up the child.

Inheritance : Among the Yerukula, the mode of inheritance is partrilineal. The property is equally divided among all the male children, primogeniture is not recognized among the Yerukula. Ultimogeniture and usufructuary modes of inheritance are not in existence among them. If there is more than one wife, the property is equally shared between them on the death of their husband. The children of the divorced wife are entitled to have a share

in the property of their deceased father because in Yerukula community even after divorce, the children live in their father's house. An adopted child ordinarily forfeits all claims of inheritance to the property of his original parents. A daughter's right to the ancestral property of her father is recognized when there is no male lineal descendant, nor a widow nor a mother of the deceased. Unmarried daughters were 'excluded from inheritance and they must be maintained out of the property of the deceased father. They are permitted to remain in possession of their father's property till their marriage.

Kinship

In tribal life the principal links for the whole society are based on kinship. "Kinship system may include socially recognized relationship based on supposed as well as actual genealogical ties" (Charles Winick, 'Dictionary of Anthropology', p. 302). The members of the Yerukula community of both the villages are tied together in groups by various types of bonds of which the linear descent and marriage ties are important. The types of relationship, thus built up are as follows :

- 1 Consanguineal one between parents, children and succeeding generations, and
- 2 Affinal relationship between spouses and their relatives on either side.

In order to get a vivid picture of the present day profile of the Yerukula society of both the villages, the system of social relationship, terms of social relationship, the rights, duties obligations, functions and prohibitions concerning different relations have been studied.

Terminologies : Kinship terminology of the Yerukula may be divided mainly into two systems.

- 1 Classificatory kinship terms, and
- 2 Particularizing or Descriptive kinship terms.

The fundamental feature of this system is, broadly speaking, the applications of the same kinship pattern in addressing most, though not all persons of the same generation and sex.

It is worth mentioning that the classificatory system is regarded as the traditional norm of the Yerukula community and the denotative terms that are now found may be due to adoption of the terms from the regional language, Telugu.

The lines below deals with an analysis of the kinship terms used by the Yerukula with regard to their application. For convenience, the following abbreviations have been used :

Father	Fa
Mother	Mo
Son	So
Daughter	Da
Sister	Si
Brother	Br
Husband	Hu
Wife	Wi
Elder	El
Younger	Yo

Table 14 : Kinship term among the Bidari Yerukula

Sl. No.	Terms in English	Terms of reference in Yerkali basha	Terms of address in Yerkali basha
1	2	3	4
1	Fa Fa Fa	Muttu Tha to	Muttu Tha ta
2	Fa Fa Mo	Muttu Jejammo	Muttu Jejamma
3	Mo Mo Mo	Muttu Jejamma	Muttu Jejamma
4	Mo Fa Fa	Beddi Mava	Mava
5	Fa Fa	Jejava	Jejava
6	Fa Fa El Br	Beru Jejava	Beru Jejava
7	Fa Fa Yo Br	Sinna Jejava	Sinna Jejava
8	Fa Mo	Jejammo	Jejamma
9	Mo Mo	Jamma	Jamma
10	Mo Fa	Tha to	Tha ta
11	Fa	Aava	Aava
12	Fa El Br	Beddava	Beddava
13	Fa Yo Br	Nanno	Nanno
14	Fa El Br Wi	Beddmma	Beddamma
15	Fa Yo Br Wi	Sowdamma	Sowdamma
16	Fa Si	Sowdamma	Sowdamma
17	Fa Si Hu	Beddimama	Beddimama
18	Mo	Amma	Amma

Contd.

Sl. No.	Terms in English	Terms of reference in Yerkali basha	Terms of address in Yerkali bashna
1	2	3	4
19	Mo El Br	Menamama	Mama
20	Mo El Br Wi	Menatta	Atta
21	Mo El Si	Beddamma	Beddamma
22	Mo Yo Si Hu	Nanno	Nano
23	Hu Fa	Mama	Mama
24	Hu Mo	Atta	Atta
25	Wi Fa	Mama	Mama
26	Hu Mo Br	Mama	Mama
27	El Br	Anna	Anna
28	Wi El Br	Mama	Mama
29	Wi El Si Hu	Jeddugo	Anna
30	Hu El Br	Berumama	Mama
31	El Si	Berakka	Akka
32	Wi El Si	Bernanga	Nanga
33	Hu El Br Wi	Nanga	Nanga
34	So Wi Mo	Emanko	Mamma
35	So Wi Mo	Nangatta	Atta
36	Da Hu	Merumago	-by name-
37	Da Hu Fa	Emankudu	Mama
38	Yo Br	Temmi	by name
39	Wi Yo Br	Matchada	"
40	So	Mago	"
41	Yo Br So	Chinna temmi Mago	"
42	El Br So	Beranna Mago	"
43	Hu El Br So	Berumama Mago	"
44	Hu Yo Br	Matchana Mago	"
45	Br So	Nanganna Mago	"
46	El Si So	Berakka Mago	"
47	Yo Si So	Tangisi Mago	"
48	Wi El Si So	Nanga mago	"
49	Wi Yo Si So	Metchinichi Mago	"
50	Si Da Hu	Meri Mago	"
51	El Si Hu	Beddi Mama	Mama
52	Wi Br So	Nangameni meri Mago	by name
53	Da	Pulla	"

Contd.

Sl. No.	Terms in English	Terms of reference in Yerkali basha	Terms of address in Yerkali bashā
1	2	3	4
54	Yo Si	Tangisi	,
55	Hu Yo Br Wi	Metchinchi	,
56	Hu Yo Da	Chinna Pulla	,
57	El Br Da	Berumama pulla	,
58	Hu El Br Da	,	,
59	Wi Br Da	Matchada pulla	,
60	Hu Si Da	Sodam pulla	,
61	Mo Br So	Manamama Mago	,
62	Hu	Manago	Neenuva
63	Wi	Pondu	Neenu Va
64	So Wi	Merumago	by name
65	Br So Wi	Meri Mago	,
66	Si So Wi	Pulla	,
67	Fa Si So	Meni Meri Mago	,
68	Fa Si Da	Nanga Menimeri Mago	by name
69	Widow	Munda Mopi	,
70	Widower	Munda Mopi	,
71	Adopted son	Valatikri Mago	by name

Though the marriage in the Yerukula community is regulated by the rule of clan exogamy still kinship is not less important. They do not like as their spouses cross cousins and maternal uncle if they are proved harmful. Parallel cousin marriages are strictly prohibited. In the case of relatives and others, calling by name is in existence among them, if the ego is younger than them, but the wife of a Yerukula man cannot utter the name of her husband. (Teknonymsy) according to Radcliffe Brown (1964) "joking relationship is a relation between two persons in which one is by custom permitted, and in some instance required, to tease or make fun of the other, who in turn is required to take no offence". Joking relationship exist among different relatives in the Yerukula society. The grand father is often seen to cut jokes with the grand daughters who in turn do the same. The same is found between grand mother and grand son. Such type of joking relationship also exists between the husband and his wife's younger sister. Avoidance relationships also exist among different relatives. This relationship exists between daughter-in-law and father-in-law, younger sisters-in-law to elder brother and younger sisters to brothers-in-law.

Interpersonal relations between kin

...

The existence of certain characteristics of interpersonal relationships between the kin is a common phenomenon in every society. These vary in degree and intensity depending on the strength and distance of the consanguineal tie or affinal bond.

A Yerukula girl's place in her original family involves less restrain and permits more open affection than she enjoys after her marriage. Her father usually never asserts strong authority over her. A wife at first talks little with other members, when she enters to conjugal house, looks up to her husband privately. The first people with whom she slowly begin to talk with are her mother in law, her husband's sisters and her husband's elder brother's wives. As a new member she is supposed to perform the household tasks like preparing meals, keeping the house premises clean, washing clothes, carrying drinking water from a well etc., along with the other women members of the household. Among the Yerukula, the greatest responsibility of the married girls is to bear children. Barrenness is feared and considered as god's curse. If the couple do not get a child, a wife is expected to request her husband to adopt a son or to marry another girl to have children. In the role of husband, a man should always be superior, initiator and receive respect from his wife. An ideal husband is the one who cares for his wife's welfare and never beats or insults her in public.

The elder siblings in the family help to look after the younger ones. In Yerukula language elder brother is referred to be *berenna* and younger brother as *tambi*. In this community the ideal of unity, solidarity and mutual support among brothers is better realized when brothers are under the firm authority of their father or when they rally against a threat from outsiders. But when father's authority is weak or absent, the brothers are not united. However, if one brother is considerably older than another, say by 8 to 10 years, their relationship is likely to become less strained. Then the elder brother, usually fulfils the duties of a father. All the brothers have equal rights on the property ; all are also vested with some authority over younger brothers. The younger brothers should also show difference to his elder brothers. In Yerukula community, an elder brother must avoid direct communication with his younger brother's wife, but younger brothers on the other hand may have familiar relations with elder brother's wife.

Yerukula call elder sister as *berekka* and younger sister as *tapisi*. The

relations between a brother and sister are usually affectionate. A brother should give protection to his sister. He should present more gifts to her than to receives from her and should feel happy just to do so. He is supposed to keep up the old relationship even after she leaves the house on her marriage. This entails special responsibility towards her husband and particularly to her children and the relationship is of great importance as according to their custom a person prefers to marry his elder sister's daughter. This finds their relationship to further roles and responsibilities. On important occasions the brothers invite their married sisters and present them with clothes and ornaments. Among the Yerukula, the brothers and sisters mutually play vital roles in arranging marriage of each others and also of their kinds. Mother plays a major role in the family and is respected by one and all. When she becomes a widow, the burden of running the family and looking after other family members falls on her shoulders. When her eldest son becomes head of the family, he consults her before taking any decision on the family matters.

As a reproductive, socializing group, the Yerukula family in Epilapalli and Ananthasagaram provides the primary model of social relations for the child. Respect, deference, avoidance are all inculcated as part of family roles among the individuals in the studied areas as elsewhere in tribal India. Kinship ties are generally taken to be the most durable, reliable, worthy and moral of all social relations among the Yerukula of studied areas.

Family, Kinship and adaptation

As Nicholas (1963) noted in his comparative study of two villages, a kind of ecological influence affects the intensity and flow of social systems. The social system of any community, whether relatively complex or simple, rests on surrounding environmental or natural systems. As mentioned earlier, Epilapalli village is situated in a forest terrain where the Yerukula population is sparse and communication difficult. The principal links among them are based on kinship. Individual equality among kinsman is assumed; dependency and subordination among men are minimized. Their primary organization is concerned with preserving the natural resources, maintaining social harmony and building proper sentiment for the ongoing functioning of the society. They are liberal in maintaining their social organization according to their community wishes, without interference of other castes and tribes who are living far away to their settlement. Social co-operation among them is extended far beyond the family unit. Consciousness of caste hierarchy with reference to other castes never arises because

they are minimizing their activities with dominant caste groups.

But in contrast to this extreme instances of individual autonomy are also found among the Yerukula in Ananthasagaram village. Social co-operation among them is limited to nuclear families. In Ananthasagaram, the Yerukula are living along with the other castes. The dominant castes like the Kapu, the Kamma, the Kuruba also regard the Bidari Yerukula as above the Mala and Madiga in the local caste hierarchy, the Yerukula accepted it and are following the same along with other castes within the settlement.

RELIGIOUS LIFE OF THE YERUKULA

Religion is the term generally used to describe man's relation to the supernatural powers and the various organised systems of belief and worship in which these relations have been expressed. The phenomenon of religion is so complex that it has been studied by scholars from various disciplines. Philosophers have studied its meaning and have tried to relate it to human nature and the ultimate cause of everything. Psychologists have tried to find why man is religious. Historians have studied its origin, growth and change. Anthropologists and sociologists have been particularly interested in the study of religion, realizing that it fulfils an important role in every society. The intimate interrelation between religion and society has been often noted in the Indian context. "One might say that all that appears to be social is in fact religious and that all that appears religious is in fact social" (Dumont and Pocock 1957 : 20).

Many sociologists and social anthropologists of the nineteenth and early twentieth century made the study of religion the central focus of interest in their more general conceptions of social and cultural life. They had adopted evolutionist perspectives to account for religious phenomena primarily in terms of religious belief. Belief in the existence of superhuman or supernatural powers is almost universal. Regarding the relationship between magic and religion, Vidyarthi says, "Experiences of certain day to day sudden happenings, of disease, death and the unexplainable have led tribal people into believing in other than the material visible world, *i.e.*, in the invisible spirit—world or supernatural power. They have established a kind of close relationship between themselves and this power by adjusting themselves to it in two ways, first by controlling or over-powering the spirit by enchanting or practising some techniques and canalizing the power, for good or bad, and secondly, by offering puja or worship to propitiate the superhuman power for acquisition of the thing or object desired. We call the former magic and the latter religion. In the tribals magic is actually an integral part of their religion and magical practices may be included as a

method of propitiation" (1976 : 236). Hence it is important for better understanding of Yerukula society to study how far they established a kind of close relationship between them and the religion.

Religious life at Epilapalli and Ananthasagaram can be viewed along a continuum which has Hinduism at one end and tribal ritual practices at the other. Hinduism embraces various gods and goddesses in its pantheon and they have varying importance. Now let me discuss the religious life of the Yerukula and its intimate relationship with the surrounding environment in the studied villages.

Religious life in Epilapalli

The animistic beliefs are an important feature of the religion among the Yerukula of Epilapalli. In the mind of the Yerukula of this region, the world consists of not only of human beings, animals and the tangible and visible objects of nature, but also of a multitude of beings that are not normally visible. For them, all spots and places are holy as they are the seats of the spirits. Animals, plants, trees, ponds, rivers, hills or mountains, stones are all abodes of spirits. Their dead people, according to them still exist through the soul or are reborn in the shape of off-spring. As Majumdar states, "there is a spirit presiding over crops, another over rainfall, still another over cattle and a number of spirits are there which dictate the attitude of the people to their neighbours..." (1961 : 422). Thus among the Yerukula community also animism carries with it the belief in malevolent spirit and powers which influence the destiny of the Yerukula. The Yerukula man thinks that several diseases, scarcity of rainfall, the low production of food grains, fertility of soil, unexpected deaths in the village etc., all these happen only when the evil spirits are not worshipped properly and the sacrifices are not made timely.

As for religion, the Yerukula of Epilapalli are polytheistic. Each sphere of nature or activity is governed by its own deity. Thus for instance the Yerukula of this village worship *Patrabanda* goddess to get good rains. The place of *Patrabanda* goddess worship consists of a small rectangular shaped shrine on an elevated ground. In the centre of the shrine there is a small round shaped stone representing the *Patrabanda* goddess. The worship of *Patrabanda* goddess and its propitiation can be associated with a belief that she instructs the clouds of the sky to give more rain at the right time. According to the Yerukula, without rain, the forest remains barren, people are made miserable and their children suffer, animals become physically

weak and their young are ill-nourished and susceptible to disease. Rain has therefore come to be directly associated not only with a sufficiency of food but with the welfare and fertility of the people, forest and their live-stock. Rain making rituals are consequently of great importance to the Yerukula of Epilapalli village.

The Yerukula believe that *Nadeedi Gangamma* protects the Epilapalli boundaries and ensure the fertility of the agricultural fields, and plentiful of forest produce. The *Nadeedi Gangamma* is enshrined in a stone form under the tree at a distance of $\frac{1}{2}$ km. to the settlement. On every Friday, the Yerukula worship her by offering coconut and flowers. A few sacrifice fowls and goats also. The Yerukula believe that on every Friday, the *Nadeedi Gangamma* goddess will watch their agricultural implements and cattle. So on this day, the Yerukula cultivators wash their agricultural implements, cows and bullocks and decorate them. The Yerukula of Epilapalli also worship *Karunoothala Gangamma* deity for the proper passage of individuals through the life cycle from birth to departure of the soul. In Epilapalli the relationship to the supernatural is maintained primarily on an individual basis. That is, there are no priests, each Yerukula adult is his own religious functionary.

The impact of Hindu gods are somewhat little in true sacred nature. There is a Ramaswamy temple situated in a pucca house at the centre of the village. They specially worship Lord Rama on Sri Ramanavami day which is a common Hindu festival. They also worship Lord Venkateswara-Triupati. A few Yerukula of this village are eager to visit fairs or Jatras conducted around the village within the radius of 30 kms. They visit Gousi-mittee swamy at Siddapuri palli, Namalagunta Mallesu swamy on Sivarathri day and they visit Narasihswamy Tirunalu at Kadiri town on *Tirunalu* (fair) day. The temple of Sri Laxmi Narasihmaswamy is one among the many renowned shrines in the Rayalaseema area. The temple is enclosed in a 500 feet square high walled compound. Shri Lakshmi Narasihmaswamy Brahmotsavam is celebrated for 16 days from Phalguni Sudha Dasami to Bahula Dasami (February-March). The Yerukula believe that if they see the procession of Lord Narasihmaswamy at Kadiri town, they get their requirements while they are in the forest for days together without any harm from wild animals.

Religious life in Ananthasagaram village

Among the Yerukula of Anantasagaram, religion tends to be more systematized and too elaborated. They are also polytheistic in religious

aspects. They worship *grama devatas* or village deities which do not actually come under the purview of Hindu pantheon. The idols of these deities are installed within or outside the village in small structures under trees. Further, these deities are propitiated with flesh, blood and liquor. *Pottulaiah* and *Peddamma* are the village deities of Ananthasagaram.

Pottulaiah: He is propitiated as and when epidemics like small-pox and cattle diseases are rampant in the village. The shrine of *Pottulaiah* in a broad stone form is located under a neem tree (*Margosa* : *Azardivanta Indica*) situated in between Yerukula settlement and other communities.

On the day previous to the worship, a Madiga, drum beater goes round the village announcing the programme for the next day and asking the people to get ready. The local washerman cleans the idol. The ground around the idol is smeared with dung and decorative designs *muggulu*¹ are made.

On the next day, a Yerukula priest propitiates the idol and decorates it with different type of flowers. Then one Yerukula starts to sacrifice goats which are brought for the same by the Yerukula. Then they go to their houses with the sacrificed animal and feast along with their relatives. This type of worship is prevalent especially in Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh.

Peddamma: *Peddamma* goddess is propitiated as and when epidemics like chicken pox, cholera spread in the village. Its shrine may be found in every village or a few villages may jointly have a single temple. The shrine is located under a Banyan tree (*Ficus bengalenis*) in the form of a carved stone. The Jatra (fair) of this deity will most preferably be done at the cost of all the villagers. Sometimes the cost will be borne by a single Yerukula family. Animals are sacrificed to please the deity. Fowl is preferred for sacrifice than goats and sheep.

1. *Muggulu* : Hindus used to prepare the powder with rice flour, in a belief that they are giving the food for ants and small beings, but that rice flour had taken the modification of lime and sand with rice flour for bright white colour. During some festival occasions they used coloured *muggulu*.

For the Yerukula of Ananthasagaram, agricultural rituals are more important than the rain making rituals. The cultivators of the Yerukula community along with other agricultural castes celebrate the *first land tilling ceremony*, in a significant way.

In Ananthasagaram the first land tilling ceremony is performed by the Yerukula along with other agricultural castes on 'Jeista Suddha Poornima' (Full moon day—May-June). Agricultural year starts with this ritual. The Yerukula cultivators proceed to their well with a pair of bulls and wash them there. The bulls are decorated, the horns are painted and the legs are anointed with *pasupu* (turmeric powder) by a married woman, preferably the mother or wife. The agricultural implements are washed and decorated with *pasupu* and *kumkuma*. In front of the main house the floor is decorated with *muggulu* on which the plough is placed with the ploughshare up and mango leaves *thornam* (festoones) are tied to the plough. The *Navadhanyalu* (nine varieties of grains—Paddy, Sajja (*pennisetum typho-rideum*), ragi (*Elensine corakana*), Pesara (*phaseolus muugo*), Minumu (*Phaseolus radiatus*), Kandi (*cajanus indicus*), Korra (*Satavia talica*), Ulava (Horse gram) are taken into a new basket to which the plough is applied and fastened with a festoon. Goddali (an axe) and Kathi (Sickle) are also tied with festoons after applying *pasupu*. Then the Yerukula ties the bullocks to the plough. All the persons wear new clothes. Coconut, jaggery and soaked *pesara pappu* (green gram) are put in a *tatta* (metallic plate) for the purpose of *prasadam* during the return. Then the mother or wife will come in front of the bullocks and smear *pasupu* on the face of the bullocks and apply *kumkuma*. Later she lights the *harati* (flame of prosperity) while singing songs. Then the adult Yerukula start tilling the land. The tilling starts from North-East and then to East and West. Then he breaks a coconut which will be made into pieces and after mixing it with jaggery and soaked green gram, distributes it as *prasadam* to every one whom so ever he meets on the way home.

In Ananthasagaram village, among the Yerukula, Hindu religious practices appear to be useful for invoking supernatural help. Though they are polytheistic in the religious spheres, in the course of adaptation of the religious beliefs of other castes, the Yerukula started worshipping the Sanskritic deities like Lord Rama, Anjaneya, Shiva, Krishna etc. They perform different festivals according to the procedure of the local Hindus and the Muslims.

The festivals

In the history of mankind from very ancient times festivals have been an important feature of social life all over the country. In many parts of India, traditional festivals have given way under the impact of changes in religious institutions, customs and beliefs. In the social life of the Yerukula of Ananthasagaram, they have adapted the Hindu festivals in their cultural fold. The ritual aspect of the Yerukula in this village mainly consists of festivals and pilgrimage. The Yerukula generally consult a Brahmin priest about the date of the festival. The Yerukula follow the Hindu almanac or *Panchangamu* according to which the months in a year are named as follows :—

<i>Hindu month</i>	<i>Corresponding English months</i>
Chaitra	March/April
Vaishakha	April/May
Jyeshta	May/June
Ashada	June/July
Sharvana	July/August
Bhadrapada	Auguse/September
Ashvinyuja	September/October
Kartika	October/November
Margasira	November/December
Pushyam	December/January
Magham	January/February
Phalguna	February/March

The above mentioned Hindu months are further divided into two *pakshamulu* (halves). The fortnight following the new moon day (amavasya) upto the fullmoon (poornima) day is known as *shukla pakshamu* (bright half). The second half begins on the day after the *poornima* and ends on the day proceeding the newmoon day called as *krishna pakshamu* (dark half). Each day of the *Pakshamu* is called as *tithi*. The Pakshamu and tithis are the basis on which the dates of the Hindu festivals are fixed.

Basing on the above measures the Yerukula of Ananthasagaram celebrate various types of religious ceremonies. The details of the festivals observed by the Yerukula of Ananthasagaram are given below with their distinctive features.

Table 15 : The details of the festivals celebrated by the Yerukula of Ananthasagaram

Sl. No.	Name of the festival	Hindu month/ English month	Description of the distinctive features
1	2	3	4
1	Telugu Samvasth- radi or Ugadi	Chitra Suddha Padyami/ March- April.	<p>It is observed on the first day of the Hindu month ‘Chaitramu’.</p> <p>The celebration starts with an oil-bath and after worship of the household sacred religious images, every Yerukula member of the household consumes a bitter solution called <i>Ugadi patchhadi</i>, prepared with <i>Kotta bellamu</i> (new jaggery) fresh flowers of neem with pieces of mango on it. Then they spend their time with different recreational activities.</p>
2	Sri Ramanavami	Chaitra Suddha Navami/March- April.	<p>During this day in Ramaswamy temple, Lord Rama is worshipped and his photo is taken in procession in which all the Yerukula participate. In the evening Panakamu (mixture of water and jaggery), <i>majjiga</i> (butter milk) and <i>pesara</i> <i>byallu</i> (soaked green gram mixed with slices of cucumber, green chillies and salt) are distributed.</p>
3	Vinayaka Chaviti	Bhadrapada Suddha Chaviti/ August-Septem- ber.	<p>This celebration is observed in honour of Lord Ganapathi, who is considered to be the son of Lord Shiva. The Yerukula believe that Lord Ganapathi removes all obstacles in life. Every household of the Yerukula worships an earthen image of Lord Ganesha in their house. On a subsequent day that is suitable to each family, the image is taken to a well and immersed in water.</p>

Sl. No.	Name of the festival	Hindu month/ English month	Description of the distinctive features
1	2	3	4
4	Sankranti	Pushyamu/ January of every year.	In Ananthasagaram, Sankranti is one of the most important festivals. The Yerukula who are doing agriculture celebrate it as a harvest festival for three days. First day is <i>Bhogi</i> , second day is <i>Sankranti</i> and the third day is known as <i>Kanuma Panduga</i> . On the first and second days they worship the household images and spend the day with different recreational activities. On the third day, i.e., on <i>Kanuma Panduga</i> , the Yerukula ryots wash cows and bullocks and decorate them with designs. Their horns are coloured and bells of different sizes are tied to them and worshipped in front of their houses.
5	Maha Shivarathri	Maga bahula Chaturdasi/ February-March.	This festival is in honour of Lord Shiva. During this day some of the Yerukula observe fast. Those who observe it are not supposed to eat any thing until the worship, which takes place late in the night. Then they observe <i>jagarana</i> , keeping awake throughout the night. For this reason, in Ananthasagaram, dramas, harikatha, Burrakatha etc., are invariably arranged by a group of youth under the name of certain sanghamu or association.
6	Peerla-Panduga	10th of Moharram (Date in Muslim month- HIJRI).	It is a popular common festival for the Muslims and the Hindus. There is a communal concord in this region. In Ananthasagaram, all castes including the Yerukula constructed a

Sl. No.	Name of the festival	Hindu month/ English month	Description of the distinctive features
1	2	3	4
			<p><i>peerla savidī</i> (a room where all the <i>peerlu</i> (alams) are kept during the festival). In this village, there is one family of the <i>mujavar</i> in order that he may be of service to them for this annual festival.</p> <p>For the first six days nothing else takes place. From seventh to nineth day the <i>alams</i> or standards which are commonly made of copper and brass commonly known as <i>peerlu</i> are placed against the wall inside the <i>peerla savidī</i>. Fires are kindled in open space in front of the <i>savidī</i> and the people both old and young fence across the fire and jump about calling out 'Hussain' Hussan ! Both Hindus and Muslims offer fatihhahs to <i>peerlu</i>. on the evening before the tenth day which according to the Muslim mode of computing time is the tenth night, all the <i>peerlu</i> are taken out in procession. The procession proceeds towards Venkatagari palli village where all <i>peerlu</i> from different villages assemble. On the following day, the <i>alams</i> are taken away to the nearby well. There the immersion ceremony takes place, which is washing the <i>peerlu</i> in water and removing them from the poles on which they were kept mounted from the first day of the festival. Then they are taken to Ananthasagaram village and kept in safe custody for the next Moharram. Then the people make feast and enjoy with their relatives.</p>

Thus the Yerukula of Ananthasagaram follow the Hindu and Muslim religious practices in a systematized and elaborate manner. Their beliefs and practices are more influenced by the constant interaction with the neighbouring Hindu communities.

CONCLUSION

In this ethnographic study of the Yerukula an attempt has been made to delineate their adaptive strategy for subsistence. It lends support to the assumption that the people in a particular environment characteristically extract and use the resources of that environment. Theorists who advocated an ecological point of view usually observe environmental circumstances in combination with a community's technology and even determining forms of social organization. As Kroeber (1969 : 350) rightly opines "that on the one hand culture can be understood primarily only in terms of cultural factors, but that on the other hand no culture is wholly intelligible without reference to the non-cultural or so called environmental factors with which it is in relation and which condition it" is incontrovertible. Thus new adaptations should be developed if effective relationship with altered habitational conditions are to be maintained. The people continue their primary activity if their habitational conditions are not all altered. The present study does not explain everything about the Bidari or Uri Yerukula but it has been oriented towards, a specific set of subsistence conditions and social problems in different environments. However, the interpretation herein presented has been that there are important differences among the socio-economic systems of the Yerukula who live in different ecological situations. This view emphasizes the functional importance of culture as an adaptive mechanism, as a generic term for the sum total of the ways, a society organizes its relations to its environment and the way it is internally organized.

Here two villages namely, Epilapalli and Ananthasagaram, situated in two different ecological environments and inhabited by the same community, the Bidari Yerukula or Uri Yerukula are studied. The village Epilapalli is located amidst huge hills and thick forest whereas Ananthasagaram is situated on a plain area which is encircled by isolated peaks and rocky clusters. Epilapalli is a homogeneous tribal village, whereas Ananthasagaram is a heterogeneous village.

The Yerukula is one of the largest tribes of Andhra Pradesh. They be-

liev that they were the original inhabitants of the state of Andhra Pradesh. The Yerukula have a common dialect called 'Yerukula basha'. From study it is evident that the Yerukula are a tribe. The Government of India, under British Rule, categorized the Yerukula as a criminal tribe. Before they became plainsmen, the Yerukula were said to be earning their livelihood by stealing, robbery and looting the villages. After independence the Government of India removed the legal stigma of 'criminal tribe'. Etymologically the word 'Yerukula' is derived from the Telugu word, 'Yerukula' which means foresight or disclosing the facts about the future, present and past of one's life. This is done by the Yerukula women. The Yerukula are said to have existed since the time of Mahabharatha and were experts in archery.

The Yerukula are divided into three large endogamous groups on the basis of their traditional occupations. These sub-divisions are Bidari Yerukula, Dabba Yerukula and Kunchi Yerukula. As stated carlier, field work was conducted among the Bidari Yerukula. Bidari Yerukula's traditional occupation is trading. They are engaged in trade; carrying rock salt, tamarind, curry leaf and pulses. They also engage themselves in other traditional occupations such as business, basketry with date palm, ropes and twines from forest fibres, slings and ropes for drawing water and tethering animals. It is found that close relation between occupational structure and the settlement exists and the product of Yerukula's skill and their environment varies widely from one habitation to another basing on the data available at hand. For instance selling of the *Karepaku*, firewood, forest fruits and the household industry of broomsticks, ropes, twines and slings are the primary occupattion to the Yerukula of Epilapalli, whereas in Ananthasagaram, the Yerukula adapted to agriculture, milk selling, bonded labour, carpentry etc., as their primary occupation.

Thus, to sum up the Yerukula economy, it is found that the economic structure of the Yerukula in both villages emphasize that the tribal economy of the Yerukula is of a *subsistence type* (Dalton : 1971) as well as of a *marginal type of economy* (Majumdar : 1961). The Yerukula and their economic strategies assure subsistence to persons through the determination of need and the pervasive social control of production and distribution. The Yerukula practises different types of occupations to sustain themselves. In my analysis I noted that in Epilapalli village, the per capita expenditure of the Yerukula per day works out to be Re. 0-90 whereas in Ananthasagaram it works out to be Rs. 1-30. I find the estimates in Ananthasagaram are slightly high which indicates that the Yerukula of

Ananthasagaram are having more capacity for adaptability and ingenuity.

It is found, that the systematic and integrated unwritten law maintains the solidarity among the Yerukula community. It is significant to state that the Yerukula council called *Kulapanchayat*, is a strong organization and is responsible for the maintenance of social order in the community as per the norms of their society. The Yerukula usually do not like their disputes to be settled by other castes and hence they try to solve all their disputes among themselves. Sometimes truth is sought to be established by ordeals like dipping of fingers in the boiling oil or lifting a red hot crow-bar. The ordeals are strictly followed by the Yerukula of Epilapalli. Whereas in Ananthasagaram at present, the Yerukula does not follow any ordeals or severe punishment for culprits. In Ananthasagaram village, where Yerukulas live closely with other castes, this practice has been given up, because of the interference of the police through the local caste leaders.

It has been noticed that in both villages, a kind of environmental influence affected the social system of the Yerukula. In Epilapalli, the Yerukula are liberal in maintaining their social organization according to their community wishes, whereas in Ananthasagaram an individual autonomy and changes in social organisation are found as a result of the interference of the other castes who are living along with them. The development of the vested interest in the caste hierarchy and the adaptation of the practice of dowry system instead of bride price by the Yerukula of Ananthasagaram village shows that they are relatively influenced by the surrounding environment.

As for religion, the Yerukula of Epilapalli are typically polytheistic. Here the relationship to the supernatural is maintained primarily on individual basis without any religious functionary or priest whereas in Ananthasagaram, the Yerukula adapted the system of inviting a Brahmin priest to do their rituals. The Yerukula of Ananthasagaram follow the Hindu religious practices in a systematized and too elaborate manner. Their beliefs and practices are more directly influenced by scriptural Hinduism.

The present study shows how the same community adapts to the different ecological situations. Thus a proper understanding of the human element in different ecological systems has a potential value for the planning of developmental activities among the tribes.

B. LAND

CONCLUSION

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Appendix —

A. Household Census

ANTHROPOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA, MYSORE

VILLAGE

EFIRKA :

DISTRICT :

STATE:

CLAN TRIBES:

FAMILY

RELIGION : 1

LANGUAGE

FAMILY NAME : _____

CLAN :

DATE : ..

TALUK :

CLAN :

HOUSE TV

C. BUDGET SCHEDULE-EXPENDITURE

PROJECT : An Ethnographic study of the Yerukula with special reference to their adaptive strategy for subsistence.

Informant's name : Tribe

H. H. No..... Sl. No..... No. of adults.....

Children.....

Items	Quantity	Source	Price Rs.	P.	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	
Rice					
Ragulu					
Jonnalu					
Wheat/powder					
Pulses					
1					
2					
3					
4					
Salt					
Chillies					
Tamarind					
Jaggery					
Seekaya					
Vegetables					
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
Tomato					
Potato					
Onion					
Garlic					
<i>Oil</i>					
Castor					
Coconut					

1	2	3	4	5
Groundnut				
Ghee				
Coconut				
Sugar				
Milk				
Buttermilk				
Butter				
Coffee				
Tea				
Soda (water)				
Meat				
Fish				
Egg				
Fruits				
Betel leaves				
Arecanuts/Powder				
Chunnam				
Tobacco				
Cigarette				
Beedi				
Matches				
Soap/Powder				
Snuff				
Intoxicant				
Gulkan				
Hotel				
Cinema and Drama				
Transport				
Fuel				
Kerosine				
<i>Clothes</i>				
Men				
Women				
Children				
Money to children				
Services				
Guru				

1	2	3	4	5
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Priest
Education
Medical
Barber
Washermen
Labourer
Pooja articles
Rent
Interest

Investigator :

Date :

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PLATE I



Goda Kottamu, a traditional house in Epilapalli village



Settlement pattern with a cattle shed close by in Epilapalli village

PLATE II



'Not searching for a morsal : This is a part of my household chores'



Ass in front, heading towards forest in search of traditional trade

PLATE III



Preparation of land just after a heavy shower



Working in a field of green grass is no doubt cheerful, but the returns bring
shadow in our face

PLATE IV



What a pleasant to look at these women labour working in a row—a rich
Yerukula supervising his field



Domestic animals have a prominent role in the Yerukula economy— A scene of
bargaining in a weekly market

PLATE V



Besides trade, the Yerukula are experts in making ropes and weaving cots



Local tanning an indigenous type of preservation

PLATE VI



Butchering scene in an Yerukula village



A Mangali, barber, extending his service to a Yerukula

PLATE VII



Recollection of my experience make me gloomy—a typical Yerukula of
Epilapalli village

PLATE VIII



Going to pilgrimage is a status symbol of the Yerukula



Grinding cereals with this heavy grinder is so hard—a mother at her *visura layi*

PLATE IX



A part of our life — The Yerukula couple

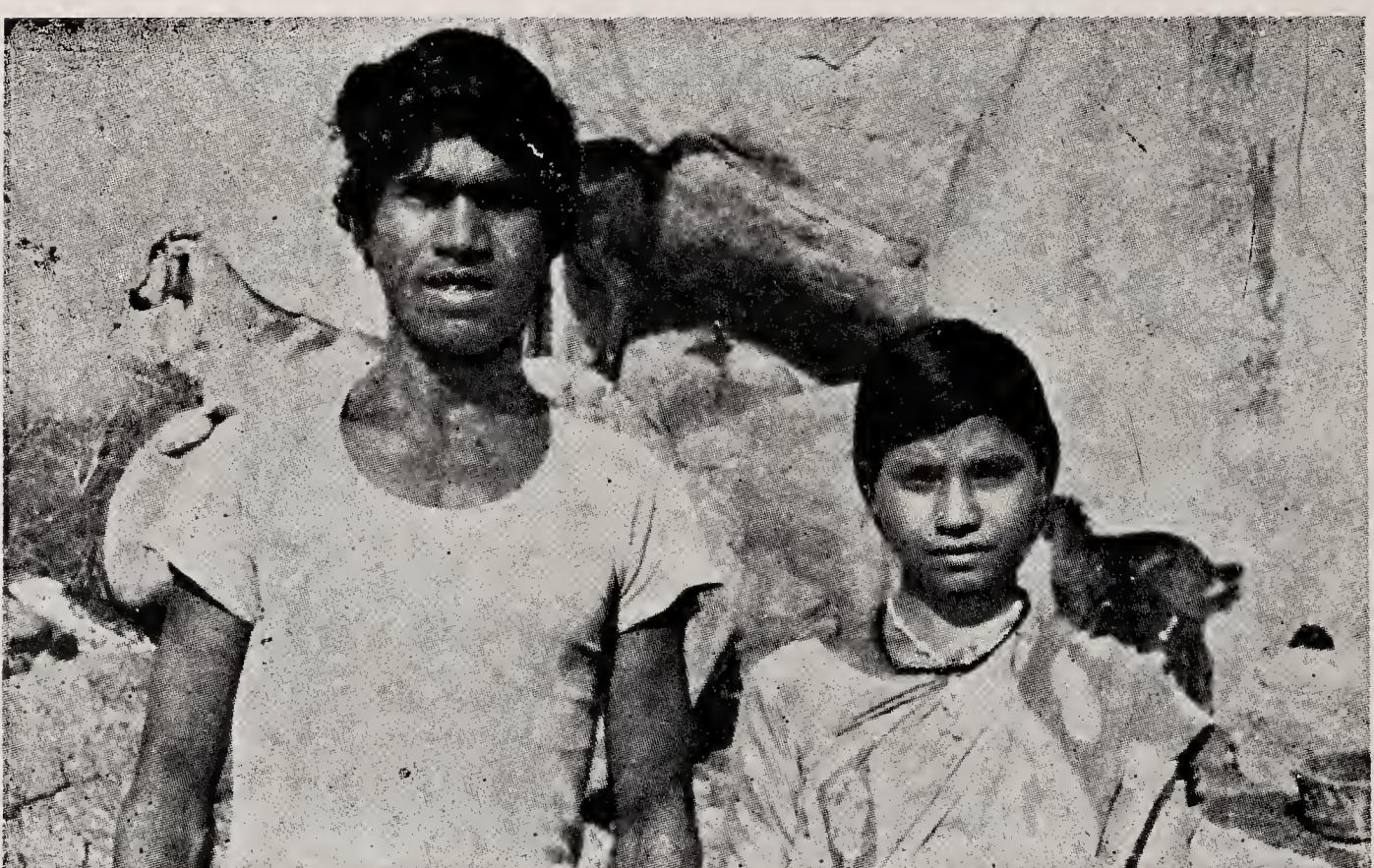


A naked expression of love — The mother with her two kids

PLATE X



This small pond fulfils the Thirsty



A birth of a lifter

PLATE XI



A show of three generations—a kin group of Pannars family at Epilapalli



A joint family of Yerukula in Ananthasagaram village



